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Information

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It's Not Easy Being a Master

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Shen Zhixian transmigrated into a book as a cannon fodder master who hatefully severed his apprentice’s spiritual root. This apprentice fell into the devil’s path and returned to make mincemeat out of him Shen Zhixian just happened to transmigrate into the last moment of the master’s captivity, and then he was reborn again. After rebirth, Shen Zhixian devoted himself to fostering and supporting his apprentice, only to discover later that his apprentice was also reborn. Even worse, the apprentice still retained the memory of his life before rebirth. Shen Zhixian: “…Disturbed.” Afterward, Shen Zhixian realized one truth: Being a master can become a high-risk occupation. Not trivial at all!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 1

The lingering moon hung in the night sky like a hook, and the Jackdaws cried a mournful tune.

The hidden room in Qingyun Sect was dark, and the disgusting stench of blood was thick enough to taste.

Eighteen bone-piercing nails penetrated the man’s limbs, chest, and abdomen, pinning his lean body firmly to the stone wall. Blood had been dripping from the body for several days, condensing from bright red into a dark brown.

Pain usurped his consciousness, and his head hung in a hazy, disoriented manner. The dazzling, beautiful face of the past was now bloodless and pale. But, the dark red teardrop birthmark underneath his left eye still gave him a devastating beauty.

Just like a flower that had bloomed too much and was about to be ruined by death.

In the silence, the sound of the door opening emitted a clear sound.

“Master.” Yan Jin walked slowly in front of him, his expression ice-cold as he mockingly said, “Can you still endure ten thousand cuts?”

The person on the wall ignored him. The sound of breathing was nonexistent, and only the slight undulations of his chest indicated that he still clung to life.

But death will soon arrive.

Yan Jin’s dark eyebrows drew down, and his long fingers pinched the man’s delicate chin. With barely any effort, he pushed the man’s head up.

On Yan Jin’s wrist was a white brocade band adorned with a little white jade, and it shook gently as he moved. He coldly said, “Consider this pain as a repayment to master for destroying my spirit root.”

These words seemed to shock the dying man in front of him, and his lips parted to emit a broken breath. “Yan...Yan…”

There was a strong taste of rust in his mouth, and when he coughed, scarlet blood spilled from his lips. The blood moistened his throat enough for him to rasp a name. “Yan Jin…”

He could only see a vague shadow in front of him. The man closed his eyes and on his lips came a small, strange smile. “Are you going to kill me? You will regret it.”

He panted, murmuring, “The person you kill will be him...You’re going to kill him…”

This remark was confusing and incoherent. Yan Jin’s expression grew colder, and he moved his hand to the fragile neck, clenching without hesitation

“Ah!”

The person wrenched out of his sluggishness and suddenly opened his eyes. His pupils flashed vacantly and strangely. Then, realizing the situation at hand, he immediately collapsed briefly before struggling to free himself, his pale lips trembling. There was something he had wanted to say--

But the blood-soaked spikes firmly imprisoned him, and Yan Jin didn’t want to listen to him anymore.

The sound of bones shattering and disintegrating lingered, then dissipated..

The dust had settled.

….

It hurts!

It was like someone had ran a knife across his skin and pulled out all his muscles and tendons. The pain came from deep within the bones, making the soul tremble and thrash under the agony. But, the mind was clear with despair.

Shen Zhixian struggled under the nightmare, his slender fingers clutching the bedcover. His body trembled spasmodically for only half a moment before his eyes snapped open, and he let out a tired breath.

...He was finally awake.

Hadn’t he just read this novel right before bedtime?! Wasn’t this the cannon fodder master with the same name as him and who ended up being slaughtered by the apprentice?! What a nightmare to be nailed to the wall and stabbed to death!

Shen Zhixuan supported himself with his elbow and turned over, wanting to sit up. But, suddenly, he stopped and stared distractedly.

Wait a minute!

This couldn’t be right!

Ignoring the dull ache in his body, he focused on a neglected memory. He did read the novel, yes, but he stayed up all night to finish it and hadn’t slept yet. Where did the nightmare come from?

This Xianxia novel was written extremely well at the beginning but ended

badly.

The protagonist, Yan Jin, had a gifted spirit root and was a cultivating genius. However, in this kind of book, miserable things often happened to the protagonist, deceiving the readers into tears.

Yan Jin's story was no exception. After experiencing torture in his youth, such as being framed by his sect, having a hateful, jealous master who severed his spirital root, etc., he was completely blackened into taking the devil's path and killed everyone who had previously harmed him. He captured and tortured his master with a thousand cuts and then strangled him to death.

The author then proceeded to say--Yan Jin found out the truth of something shortly after the death of his master, and his mind snapped. He went completely crazy and committed suicide. The End.

That was it. The author didn't even bother to write what the truth was.

When Shen Zhixian, who had spent the whole night reading, arrived at this terrible ending, he felt like he was choking on shit.

After deciding to forget about it and then spending half an hour sending the author a box of cuttingly harsh words, Shen Zhixian decided to go downstairs to buy himself some breakfast to calm down, only to find that the elevator was broken. As a result, he could only take the stairs.

He forgot that he had low blood sugar, added with an empty stomach and a sleepless night. Due to a momentary dizziness, he lost his footing and cartwheeled down the stairs, ending with his head knocked against the wall.

It was long past work time, and no one passed by in the quiet corridor.

Shen Zhixian's fall was very serious, and soon his shirt was wet with sticky blood. The smell of blood was sharp, making him drowsy. He didn't know if he had called out for help. He just opened his eyes hard, feeling that his body was sore and painful, like being sliced and chopped.

His eyes flickered for a moment, and in a bloody confusion, it was as if someone was standing in front of him, clenching his throat tightly.

Shen Zhixian had landed on his back, and he was unable to say a word. The last thing he saw was the faint shape of the person in front of him and…

A pair of cold, red eyes..

And then, the memory ended.

WTF!

Shen Zhixian swallowed and touched his throat. And those red eyes. Why had he thought of the scene in the book, when Yan Jin killed his master?!!

Because he had the same name as this cannon fodder, he paid special attention whenever “Shen Zhixian” was mentioned in the book. And, he especially paid attention to the part where he died.

Body pinned by long nails, thousand of cuts, throat shattered.

Shen Zhixian pursed his lips and pushed himself off the bed. He walked to the bronze mirror not far away. After a glance, he felt as if he was struck dead by lightning.

The young man in the mirror looked both familiar and unfamiliar.

He looked familiar because this face was similar to the face he had been seeing in the mirror for more than twenty years. But, it was also unfamiliar because...what was this tear-shaped birthmark? Why was there a birthmark?

Coupled with his pale and refined features, the birthmark turned the person into a dazzling beauty.

Shen Zhixian looked stiffly at his neck for a long time, until some intermittent and vague memories quietly flooded his mind. Finally, he

closed his eyes, accepting the fact that he had transmigrated into a book and, worst yet, transmigrated into that of a cannon fodder.

He was depressed for a moment, sighed, and went to lie down on the bed to think seriously about life.

The original book once said that “Shen Zhixian” had a good spirit root and was exceptional at cultivating. He was second in charge of Qingyun Sect, but after sustaining an injury while out on training, he was plagued with a heart injury that struck him intermittently.

Later, he could no longer make any progress in his cultivation, so much so that he could not even use spiritual power for long. His supremacy eventually fell on to one of his sect brothers, and he retired as an elder with no official duties.

Shen Zhixian leaned against the couch for a while and thought about it. But, he couldn’t remember what had happened to cause such a serious heart injury. It was probably because he had just transmigrated so that specific memory hadn’t merged yet.

As he was pondering, he was surprised by two hard knocks on the door, causing his heart to jerk in alarm. Before he could ask who it was, the door was pushed open.

Surely his status in Qingyun Sect couldn’t be so low that others can enter and leave his room at will without his consent?!

Still muttering angrily in his heart, Shen Zhixian raised his eyes to look at the person entering, and the fire immediately extinguished. Oh, just great. This person had some power.

This gentle and refined looking man was wearing a simple, light blue robe with a jade pendant representing the identity of sect leader hanging on his waist.

He probably didn’t expect Shen Zhixian to be awake. Two pairs of eyes

stared at each other for a moment. Shen Zhixian saw a trace of surprise quickly flash across the other man's eyes. Soon after, a relieved smile appeared. "Junior brother is awake?"

No kidding! If he wasn't awake, he must be sleepwalking with his eyes open.

Shen Zhixian lightly murmured in assent but did not bother to get up. The original body's memory had not full integrated, and some memories were still vague. Such as, this time, why did his heart injury suddenly break out to such an extent that he would pass out?

However, some things were very instinctive, such as his attitude towards Song Ming, the man with the highest position in Qingyun Sect.

It was neither cold nor hot, neither harmonious nor insipid.

In fact, this was understandable. After all, the Qingyun Sect leader position should have belonged to the original. In the eyes of the original body, Song Ming probably picked up the position by sheer luck

Song Ming seemed very accustomed to his attitude and only smiled mildly, like a good brother who pampered his younger brother's temper. "I will take care of the incident with the Hidden Sword Pavillion so that junior brother can relax his heart. You need not blame yourself for this incident."

After hearing this, Shen Zhixian realized that he didn't know the previous situation and couldn't make sense of what was happening. Therefore, he was afraid that the more he talked, the more flaws he would expose. He could only answer vaguely and non-committedly. Then, he pretended to be drowsy.

Song Ming stopped and looked at him warmly. "Since you're sleepy, senior brother will leave first. Your little disciple is still waiting outside. I'll let him come in and wait for you to rest."

Little disciple.

Shen Zhixian’s first thought was Yan Jin. The red eyes flickered across his mind, and his body began to ache again. He almost refused to speak.

However, as soon as he looked up and saw Song Ming’s dark and deep eyes, Shen Zhixuan’s heart jerked with discomfort. He swallowed and murmured a slight, “Mmmm.”

The light blue figure slowly walked away. After a while, someone slipped in through the half-open door and called out, “Master.”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 2

Not Yan Jin.

Although he didn’t remember what Yan Jin looked like at this time, Shen Zhixian only had to glance at the person in front of him to know that he was not Yan Jin.

After all, this boy was too ordinary.

It wasn’t that he looked ugly. Rather, he could only be said that he have mediocre, forgettable features. This type of appearance could never be the protagonist.

Shen Zhixian, a veteran at lying low, was relieved and let out an inaudible sigh. Now, whenever he thought of Yan Jin, he remembered the immersive nightmare of death. There was only one word to describe his current mood: terrified.

However, this so-called “little disciple”...

Shen Zhixian’s eyes looked thoughtful as he tried to remember who this person might be.

He was indeed "Shen Zhixian's" apprentice.

One year ago, shortly after the original person accepted Yan Jin as a disciple, he also accepted another disciple named Yan Shen at the sect’s Sword Contest.

Yan Shen was only 13 or 14 years old this year and still had a childish face. However, he looked unexpectedly strong and had a relatively good spiritual foundation.

As he thought, his dark eyelashes were slightly lowered, contrasting with the white color of his skin. He was leaning loosely against the side of the bed, his long hair falling behind him in a stream of black satin. The whole man looked elegantly lazy and sleepy.

Yan Shen's eyes flashed with an inexplicable emotion, but he soon concealed it.

He took two to three steps closer to Shen Zhixian and called "Master" again. As he looked at Shen Zhixian with a worried expression, he said, "Master, are you still uncomfortable? Don't be angry with senior brother. Senior brother had already received his punishment and was sent to the Cliff of Reflection. Surely, he will realize his mistake and not do it again."

Punishment at the Cliff of Reflection.

Realization dawned, and Shen Zhixian finally recalled at what point of the plot he was in.

Then, his eyes darkened, and he wanted to faint immediately and pretend that he didn't know anything. In this part of the plot, Yan Jin was indeed in difficult straits.

Qingyun Sect had a Hidden Sword Pavillion, which was a restricted area. As such, it was opened only once every five years and only to the top three winning disciples of the Sword Contest.

In the book, Yan Jin broke into the Hidden Sword Pavillion in the middle of the night and not only destroyed more than half of the swords on the first floor but also ended up hurting many disciples who tried to stop him. After being restrained, Yan Jin refused to plead guilty. He only said through gritted teeth that he had to break into it and then refused to say anything else.

Yan Jin was born with an excellent spirit root. If it was seven or eight years ago, the original body could probably teach him well. But, since his heart injury, the original's mentality had greatly changed.

He was deeply jealou of Yan Jin.

Therefore, whenever Yan Jin was in trouble, the original did not bother distinguishing between truth and lies and had no intention of protecting his disciple. Therefore, when he saw that Yan Jin had refused to plead guilty, he merely sneered, took out his punishment whip, lashed him three times and then told him to go to the Cliff of Reflection.

His punishing whip was not a small thing. It was specially designed by the sect to punish disciples who had made grave mistakes. The whip had a magic property, ensuring that the one being punished could not resist with spiritual power and could only suffer through the lashes.

The first lash broke the skin, the second lash wound the meat, and the third lash sawed the bone, making it so that the wound would take several months to heal.

The Cliff of Reflection was not a good place for such wounds. On the high cliffs, enduring the cold wind and the snow and ice, Yan Jin, who had received three lashes from the punishment whip, had a difficult time enduring.

This punishment would inevitably damage Yan Jin's spirit root, causing him to endure the bitter chill every time he used his spiritual power. Even worse, soon after this incident, the original body severed Yan Jin's spirit root and expelled him from the sect, thus turning him into a waste.

"Master?" Yan Shen called.

Shen Zhixian returned to the moment at hand and gently couched to hide the moment of inattention. He asked quietly, "How is Yan Jin right now?"

Yan Shen said, “Senior brother passed out but went to the cliff as soon as he woke up. Master, senior brother had already been punished like this and won’t do it again. Please don’t harm your body and worry your disciples…”

Shen Zhixian had some awareness in his heart. He had read the original book and, of course, he knew the general situation regarding the Hidden Sword Pavillion incident. The person who framed Yan Jin...had some relationship with this person in front of him.

It wasn’t a coincidence that Yan Shen could become his apprentice. Naturally, someone had helped him.

This thirteen or fourteen year old youth looked worried, as if he was really sincerely consoling Shen Zhixian, but the words he spit out firmly nailed Yan Jin to the wrong pillar.

Shen Zhixian straightened and brushed Yan Shen’s hand away. He calmly said, “Go out.”

Yan Shen’s eyes flickered. Holding the words to that rose in his mind, he merely said, “Okay.”

Without ceremony, the door closed behind him.

As soon as the person left, Shen Zhixian immediately turned over and settled down to look through the box of elixirs and medicines--he still had to rescue Yan Jin from the cliff! Otherwise, it might be too late!

Never could he imagine that he would transmigrate into the book, but he still wanted to turn the situation around. Thinking about how easily Yan Jin annihilated the entire Qingyun Sect and how he had ruthlessly and savagely tortured of his own master, Shen Zhixian couldn't help but shivered. He held a bunch of top-quality cold-repellent medicines to his chest.

At present, the only way out was to quickly increase the favorability of the protagonist, Yan Jin, so that the terrible nightmare would not come to pass.

Be a good master, be a good master...Shen Zhixian kept chanting this as he packed things up. Since gaining a bit of the previous owner’s memory, he understood a bit of spiritual power and used it to leave the house quietly.

Using this same memory to avoid obstacles and people along the way, Shen Zhixian successfully found the Cliff of Reflection.

The cliff was incredibly high. Even standing underneath, once could feel the cold chill emitting from the ice and snow above. Without using spiritual energy, it would be difficult to even breathe easily.

Shen Zhixian frowned and glanced around. He saw a stone path covered with snow that was just wide enough for one person. He tried to take two steps at once and slipped.

The Cliff of Reflection was uninhabited, and a formation array was needed to get to the top. However, disciples who were being punished could not use this array. Therefore, Yan Jin would have to drag his bruised body up the steep slope step by step...Shen Zhixian sighed, left his thoughts behind him and started to climb the mountain.

He considered flying up with magic, but he was still not very skilled with using spiritual power and was afraid of falling into the depths halfway. The reason he also could not use the formation array was because he didn’t want his secret trip to be discovered.

The Cliff of Reflection was high and difficult to climb. Fortunately, his body was very durable when it was not suffering from heart injury. Shen Zhixian climbed for nearly an hour and finally found the place where Yan Jin was located.

There was a small, narrow cave, but the people in there would not be able to block the wind nor snow. As soon as Shen Zhixian raised his eyes, he saw a snowman sitting there. Feeling suddenly shocked, he hurriedly pulled the person out.

The boy who was wearing an old, thin robe was pale. His eyes were closed,

and he was motionless as the snow buried him. Shen Zhixian touched his face, which was terribly cold.

He quickly pulled out a pile of medicines and turned his back to block the wind and snow. As he held the person in his arms, he opened the thin robe to feel the youth's pulse. Determining that his heart was still beating, he was relieved and began to pour cold-repellent medicines into his mouth.

However, the teenager was still vigilant despite being unconscious. He clenched his teeth and refused to relax enough to swallow. Shen Zhixian had no choice but to put down the medicines and use his own spiritual power to rub down his frozen limbs.

After so much rubbing, he discovered that the young man in his arms was terribly thin, his skin almost sticking to his bones and holding him was like holding a bamboo pole. Yan Jin should be fifteen or sixteen years old this year. Looking at this, he was afraid that Yan Jin might not be as tall as he should have been.

The injury from the punishment and the whipping on his back had obviously been left untreated. The blood had already congealed, and his clothes had stuck to it and frozen solid. Seeing this horrible sight, Shen Zhixian felt a ghost pain on his own back.

He sighed in distressed, his heart of a loving master completely stunned. For the first time, he felt truly angry at the original owner for tossing around a good child like this. If Yan Jin wasn't the protagonist and protected by the Heavenly Dao, he would have died after three lashes.

He changed his posture a little so that Yan Jin laid in his arms, intending to deal with the wound. The teen suddenly woke up with a moan. He opened his eyes and looked up. Upon seeing Shen Zhixian, a vicious light flashed across his eyes before he pushed him away.

Shen Zhixian was caught off guard and subconsciously leaned back, allowing himself to be pushed away.

The push seemed to have exhausted all of the youth’s remaining strength. He gasped and, without Shen Zhixian to hold him, fell back.

Seeing this, Shen Zhixian quickly lifted his hands to cushion Yan Jin’s head, which would have fallen onto a condensed piece of ice shard. If his head had fallen upon it, there would have been another bloody wound to worry about.

“Hisss--”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 3

The ice rock pierced the back of his hand, and Shen Zhixian drew in a hiss of breath--This unlucky youth was already so heavily injured and would surely have no more strength for additional wounds.

He helped Yan Jin up, shook off the bunch of blood beading from his own wound, and pursed his lips. He couldn’t help sighing that he would hurt his hand before even succeeding in helping Yan Jin.

However, he couldn’t care less about himself. After all, the young man was moving too much, tearing open the wounds that was deep enough to expose the bones on his back. As a result, scarlet blood poured out.

“Don’t move...Hey, your wound will reopen!”

Yan Jin’s mood was not stable. He looked at Shen Zhixuan defensively and vigilantly, his eyes fierce and cruel with cold hatred.

This was strange.

It was because he was worried that Yan Jin would be angry that he rushed up to see him. At this point in the plot, Yan Jin should be a normal, ordinary person. How could there be such deep-seated hatred?

As this vague thought crossed his mind, Shen Zhixian used one hand to hug the young man who wanted to push him away and opened the jade bottle cap with the hand other, tipping the medicine into the youth’s mouth.

In the end, Yan Jin suffered from severe injuries and lost too much blood.

He had also been frozen for so long and lacked the strength to break free. As a result, he was forced to swallow a few medicines and elixir. They melted into his mouth, running like warm currents down his throat, and warmth gradually filled his chest and limbs. He froze, and his struggled ceased.

The man in front of Yan Jin's eyes looked slightly blurry, his appearance seemingly good-natured. But, Yan Jin knew that this was only an illusion. Even if this person turned to ashes, he could still recognize his breath!

He was Yan Jin's good master! The good master who severed his spirit root!

Yan Jin gritted his teeth and pushed down his hatred.

No.

He couldn't reveal any flaws yet.

At this time, Shen Zhixian was much stronger than him. If he rashly angered him, he was sure that the torture would come early.

Yan Jin propped his hands in the snow where the other person couldn't see and tightly fisted them, leaving bloody crescent wounds where his nails had gouged into his palms. He gasped, lowered his head slightly, suppressed his hatred, and hoarsely said, "Master."

The memory of his spirit root being broken made his body tremble with pain. He let out a cold breath and told himself over and over again.

He was alive.

He came back to life.

After Shen Zhixian cut off his spirit root inch by inch, he was...reborn.

He was familiar with this scene. After the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident, he received three lashes and went to the Cliff of Reflection. After reflecting

for a whole month, his spirit root had frostbite, and he almost died before Shen Zhixian finally allowed him down the cliff.

After going down the mountain, he thought that he could breathe at last. Who knew that Shen Zhixian would soon stand in front of him and indifferently severed his spirit root?

Deeply in pain, he had fainted, and when he woke up again, Yan Shen was looking down at him meaningfully and telling him with a slight smile that Master had told him to go to the Cliff of Reflection.

It wasn't until he climbed back up the cliff that he finally accepted the fact that he had been reborn. But, why would Shen Zhixian appear here at this moment?!!

Did something happen to make Shen Zhixian change his mind and cause the upcoming future events to happen sooner?

As he held his thin and weak body tight, Yan Jin's dark eyes stared at Shen Zhixian's hand on the jade bottle. The hand was slender and fair with white fingertips that looked like delicate jade, seeming out of place among this dirty snow.

Probably to prevent his wide sleeves from getting in the way, Shen Zhixian lifted his hands and shook them, causing the sleeves to slip down to his elbows and revealing fair, white wrists. A string of crystal jade bead was wounded three to four laps around one wrist.

It made him look all the more noble.

But Yan Jin remembered how those hands were stained with blood.

Relentless and cruel.

Shen Zhixuan had no idea what Yan Jin was thinking. He was afraid that the young man would struggle and end up making his wound more severe. With

his injured hand, he held him firmly while the other hand put aside the small, jade bottle and went looking for another elixir.

Spirit Returning Elixir can replenish a lot of spiritual power in a short time. This thing was precious, especially the top-grade ones found in Shen Zhixian’s house

Yan Jin probably used up his spiritual power to hold back the chill when he climbed up the cliff. Right now, he couldn't even protect himself from the cold. His body was frozen stiff, but Spirit Returning Elixir would still work.

“Look! Eat it.” Finally locating the jade bottle containing the Spirit Returning Elixir, Shen Zhixian stuffed the entire bottle in the young man’s hand, then picked up the big urn to the side and surrounded him to prevent the snow from touching his wound.

Seeing that Yan Jin was holding the jade bottle rigidly, Shen Zhixian remembered that he seemed to have heard a low “Master” coming from the youth’s lips, and he couldn’t help but drop his forehead into his palm. Well, it turned out that Yan Jin recognized him. No wonder his reaction was so intense.

He groaned for a moment then completely dispelled the worry. Although he didn’t know how Yan Jin recognized him, there was no use to cover now that he had been greeted.

The teen stared at him like a hedgehog, his quills raised in defense.

Shen Zhixian breathed a sigh of relief, made a kind gesture, pointed at the jade bottle in the man’s hand, and said, “Spirit Returning Elixir.”

Then, he pointed to bottle scattered on the ground. “Cold-Dispelling Pallet, Homeostatic Medicine, Flesh Regrowth Powder. In a bit, I’ll take care of your wound.”

Yan Jin remained unmoved. He clutched the little jade bottle firmly in his hands and endured again and again. Finally, he opened his mouth and

tightly said, “Master came to personally dispose of this disciple?”

After saying this, he raised his head to look at Shen Zhixian. The fifteen-year-old was suffering from chronic malnutrition and had terribly hollow cheeks. His age and calmness made him look particularly distressing.

Shen Zhixian stared at him for a moment, his heart stirring with emotions, and resisted the urge to rub the other party’s head. In the end, he only said, “No.”

He considered his words carefully, not wanting “Shen Zhixian” to suddenly change and arouse suspicion. However, he also didn’t want Yan Jin to remain so hostile to him. The youth was so hurt, and he just couldn’t bear it anymore so he said a few more words.

“Master was too impulsive in the afternoon.”

He saw that Yan Jin was just holding the jade bottle and simply took it back, opened the lid, poured out a few pills, and stuffed them into the other person’s mouth.

The cave was very narrow, making it extremely difficult to avoid Shen Zhixian. Moreover, Yan Jin had no strength left. He was forced by Shen Zhixian, and he frowned, pursing his lips, as a gentle spiritual force flowed down, moistening his dry spirit root and slightly easing the chill and pain of the punishing whip.

Shen Zhixian smiled slightly, and said softly, "Come here and let me look at the wound."

.....

After dealing with the wound while the other party was not paying attention, Shen Zhixian left behind the medicine and carefully went back down the mountain.

Although he had originally intended to send the teen down immediately, he

realized that it was too inconsistent with the past “Shen Zhixian.” He had no intention to suddenly and dramatically change attitude.

The first reason was Yan Jin’s attitude. He was afraid of his cold-hearted master. If Shen Zhixian changed his attitude rashly, it would only made Jan Yin more skeptical and suspicious.

The second was...

Shen Zhixian raised his hand and rubbed his eyebrows, his expression gradually calming down.

Being a cannon fodder...was not as simple as what was written in novels.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 4

Shen Zhixian seriously tried to recall the content of the book.

In the book, the relevant matters about the original "Shen Zhixian" was not written in detail. After all, he was only a cannon fodder that induced the protagonist to blacken. His biggest role was to torture Yan Jin and grind him into having a cold heart.

Where did the original heart trouble come from, and what exactly happened at that time?

...Not written.

Song Ming was not the most outstanding of their master’s disciples. Why did he end up being the sect leader?

...Not written.

Even the death of their master, the former sect leader of Qingyun Sect, was a mystery. Shen Zhixian clearly remembered that the former sect leader was in excellent condition. Once he retired into seclusion, a promotion would have been a sure thing.

Think carefully.

When reading a book, it was easy to read quickly and not use one’s brain. Now that he had transmigrated into a cannon fodder in the book, he wished he was the reincarnation of Sherlock Holmes.

Shen Zhixian pondered the matter and even slowed down for a moment.

Eh, it was still too hard to understand.

It was surely no coincidence that Yan Shan could become the original Shen Zhixian’s disciple. This was probably the result of Song Ming’s underhanded contributions. Nearly a year ago, it was Song Ming who mentioned a few words at the Sword Competition and convinced the original person to receive Yan Shen on the spot.

After Yan Shen became Yan Jin's junior brother, he did not bully the latter outright.

Relying on the original person’s acquiescence and his own carefully constructed image of a cheerful sunshine, he used the status of the original’s most loved disciple to secretly pull many people to his side to create stumbling blocks for Yan Jin.

This time, the plot with the Hidden Sword Pavillion was a deep one. One couldn’t help but wonder whether Song Ming had a hand in this affair.

Most likely, he did. If not, then he probably knew the hidden details of the plot.

Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows again, which was his usual action when thinking about difficult questions.

In the book, the original Shen Zhixian’s attitude toward Song Ming was neither cold nor warm. However, after seeing Song Ming this afternoon, he felt slightly uncomfortable. The more he thought about it seriously, the more he realized how inconsistent this behavior was, considering the factors involved.

Obviously, when Shen Zhixian was reading the novel, he didn’t pay much attention to this sect leader supporting role who was killed shortly after the original Shen Zhixian was strangled to death.

Eh?

How did Song Ming die?

...It seemed that the author didn't write it.

The original person had lost the position of sect leader due to his heart injury, which gave Song Ming the opportunity to become the top person in power in the sect. Could it be that Song Ming was worried that he would one day heal his heart and take back the position, and so decided to guard against him secretly?

This wasn’t without reason.

However, now that the original person was no longer present, the current Shen Zhixian just wanted to treat Yan Jin well to avoid a miserable ending. He was not ambitious and had no intention of fighting for the sect leader position.

Shen Zhixian paused, identified a direction, and re-implemented the diversionary spell. Following the original person's memory, he walked toward the Hidden Sword Pavilion.

Qingyun Sect was a sword sect. In order to encourage sect disciples to diligently cultivate, a Hidden Sword Pavilion was constructed. The pavilion contained countless swords and daggers, along with other valuable treasures.

The Sword Competition was held every five years, and the top three disciples would not only have the opportunity to be accepted by either the Sect Leader or the five Elders as a personal disciple, but also be able to enter the Hidden Sword Pavilion to select their own personal sword.

Shen Zhixian remembered that the book had briefly mentioned that Yan Shen deliberately schemed to force Yan Jin to enter the Hidden Sword Pavilion. However, it did not provide detailed explanation.

As he stood behind a tree not far from the Hidden Sword Pavilion, he had a vague idea. Muttered indistinctly to himself, he bent down and picked up a few fallen leaves.

The Hidden Sword Pavilion was only recently broken into and had yet to be cleaned. However, Song Ming took care to send a few disciples to guard the building. These disciples were now carefully patrolling the base of the structure and kept a vigilant eye out for intruders.

Shen Zhixian pinched several fallen leaves between his fingers and pondered the situation. Once he came up with a general strategy, he rubbed the fallen leaves between his fingers, cast a spell from memory, and released them toward the pavilion. As he waited, his body gradually disappeared, leaving behind only a small shadow.

As the disciples guard the Hidden Sword Pavilion with serious faces, a gust of wind suddenly blew over them. They were immediately alerted and looked around with narrowed eyes.

However, they didn’t find anything out of the ordinary and only saw a lot of dead leaves that were blown by the wind and spinning drunkenly toward them.

It was a funny sight.

A young disciple couldn't help but burst out laughing. He broke the silence and said, "This dead leaf is funny. It’s wind-drunk.”

The senior disciple remained calm. He frowned as he looked at the dead leaves turning around and around. His hand tightened on the hilt of his sword as he said, “Be careful. Don’t be careless.”

The young disciple didn’t care much. “We’re all here to guard. The person who dared to break in had already broken in and was sent to the Cliff of Reflection. Who else would dare come? Besides, the Sect Leader even personally came to set restrictions on the Hidden Sword Pavilion. No one can break in easily.”

The reason Yan Jin was able to break in was because these restrictions were partially enabled. Now, the Hidden Sword Pavilion was completely restricted. Even an ant would not be able to enter, much less a person.

The senior disciple was a little hesitant. He looked around and lowered his voice. “I heard that Elder Shen is not subjected to any sect restrictions.”

"Ah?" After immediately being reproached by the senior disciple to lower his voice, the junior disciple didn’t hesitate to show his willingness to hear the details. He whispered, “What’s going on? I didn’t know this at all!

The other two disciples smelled a sect secret and carefully perked their ears to listen.

“Elder Shen was supposed to inherit the position of Sect Leader. Then, I don’t know what happened, but he was replaced by Sect Leader Song...Hush! I’ll just tell you a few words. Don’t spread it out.”

After seeing the little junior disciple gathering around him like small chicks pecking at rice grains, the senior disciples quietly went on to say, “Elder Shen was the former Sect Leader’s personal inheriting disciple. He was greatly doted upon and received a lot of privileges.”

As the disciples gathered closer to quietly gossip, they didn’t notice that a little shadow had sneaked pass and entered the Hidden Sword Pavilion.

--Sure enough. There was no obstruction.

As Shen Zhixian lamented over how much the former sect leader had loved the original Shen Zhixian, he avoided the broken swords at his feet and carefully scanned his surroundings.

The Hidden Sword Pavilion had seven floors. As the floor became higher, the quality of swords would also increase. The disciples who entered to select swords could only use their own abilities to climb up the many floors.

When Yan Jin trespassed the Hidden Sword Pavilion, everyone assumed he wanted to steal a sword. This was ridiculous because, from beginning to end, Yan Jan seemed to have no intention of climbing the second floor. His goal had been the first floor, and the swords on the first floor…

To put it bluntly, the swords stored on the first floor were no better than high-quality toys. There was no way Yan Jin would fancy the toy swords here. The most important thing was the Shen Zhixian knew very well that Yan Jin did not obtain his sword here.

Most of the swords on the first floor were destroyed when Yan Jin fought with the other disciples. The broken swords were scattered messily on the floor and had not been cleaned up yet.

Shen Zhixian looked for a while and finally found what he was looking for under a broken sword in the corner.

It was a piece of flowing cloud pattern brocade adorned with single, small white jade.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 5

Shen Zhixian rubbed the brocade between his fingers.

The golden white cloth was embroidered with flowing clouds, the stitching smooth and delicate. Even though it was high-quality brocade silk, it could not avoid being worn down by age.

This belonged to Yan Jin. Although he didn’t know where it originally came from, Shen Zhixian knew that Yan Jin valued this piece of ribbon so much that he would rather be injured than damage or lose it.

Shen Zhixian was eighty percent certain that the plot involved stealing this brocade ribbon and throwing it into the Hidden Sword Pavilion. The perpetrator probably spoke some provocative words, causing Yan Jin to rush into the Hidden Sword Pavilion without any consideration for the consequences. Otherwise, considering Yan Jin’s calm temperament, he would not have taken such a big risk.

Shen Zhixian stared down at the ribbon caught between his fingers and, after a moment, and finally made up his mind.

In normal circumstances, his temperament was usually calm, relaxed, and easy-going. However, he didn’t like living under an unknown danger. It was unpleasant to feel like there was a knife hanging over his head, not knowing when it would drop.

After he resolved all the strange things around him and fixed things with Yan Jin, he would be able to live his own life in peace. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?

Another gust of wind blew through, and the dead leaves that had just landed once again scattered with the wind, attracting the disciples' attention.

This group of young disciples had just entered the sect, and the senior disciple was only seventeen or eighteen years old. He usually practiced with all his heart and soul. There weren’t so many twists and turns in his mind, let alone suspecting that the Elder Shen, who was "unrestricted," would really sneak in and out under their eyelids.

They were still whispering and laughing at the stupid dead leaves when Shen Zhixuan quietly left.

After transmigrating and being directly tossed from side to side this evening, it was almost dawn by the time he returned back to his room.

He hadn’t slept all night...Ah, no. He had actually gone about two nights without sleep now, and he was mentally exhausted. He poured himself a cup of cold tea, gradually calmed, and tried to figure out everything that needed to be done next.

The injury at the back of his hand was not serious and only required treatment with some Flesh Regenerating Powder. There was a momentary chill when the medicine was applied, but after a while, it was more than half healed, leaving the injury site only looking slightly red and swollen.

Shen Zhixian glanced at it, shook his sleeves and dangled them over his hands to cover to injury. This complexion was too white, white as porcelain, and the redness and swelling were especially noticeable.

When dawn seeped through the windows, it found Shen Zhixian digging through the original person’s wardrobe to familiarize himself with it. Then, after carefully reorganizing it, he changed into a new set of clothes and left the house. The destination: the place where the leaders of the sect meets.

Truthfully speaking, Song Ming wasn’t a terrible sword sect leader.

Every day, he would diligently have a morning meeting, approve sectarian matters, practice, and preside over all kinds of major events. He often handled matters smoothly and skillfully.

If the original Shen Zhixian became the sect leader, he might not be as good or diligent as Song Ming.

Shen Zhixian's eyes flashed for a moment, recalling the simple description of the original person in the book and then linking it with the original's memory in his mind, barely managing to give shape to the type of person the original Shen Zhixian was.

From his rough estimation, the original was an arrogant, conceited man. His heart was higher than the sky but his life was thinner than paper.

However, the memory before the heart injury was always vague. Occasionally, there would be brief flashes of pictures but they were difficult to catch or follow.

Leaving these behind for the time being, Shen Zhixian nodded and pushed in before Song Ming could leave.

The meeting hall was not restricted. Naturally, the disciples would not dare interrupt the Sect Leader and the elders in charge of major affairs.

He was one of the five elders.

In fact, there were originally only four elders in Qingyun Sect. These elders were in charge of personnel, finance, diplomacy, and internal affairs. However, after the original Shen Zhixian lost the position of sect leader, the former Sect Leader established a main peak for him and made him the fifth elder.

But, before he could plan more for Shen Zhixian, the former Sect Leader suddenly died.

The status of fifth elder was a little awkward. For the sake of the former

Sect Leader, he had a very high status and was respected by Song Ming. However, he didn’t have any clear power, which gave him a delicate identity.

In the early years, the original person would occasionally attend these meetings, but later, when the heart disease could not be resolved, he became impatient with these trivial matters and stopped setting foot here.

So when Shen Zhixian appeared here today, even Song Ming was slightly surprised.

"Junior Brother Zhixian?"

Shen Zhixian nodded slightly at him, called "Sect Leader" nonchalantly, calmly found a place on the side to sit down, and motioned for them to continue.

This morning meeting was almost coming to an end. Before Shen Zhixian came in, Song Ming was sitting erect on the customary seat of honor and saying his usual closing remarks. However, after Shen Zhixian entered, everyone immediately cast their eyes to him.

Song Ming’s eyes were deep and serene, and a mild smile hung on his lips. He stopped talking and calmly said, "It’s rare to see Junior Brother Zhixian at these meetings."

Shen Zhixian saw that they had no intention to continue the discussion and didn't bother to talk nonsense. He just said, "Sect Leader has finished speaking?"

Song Ming didn’t know what he meant, but he nodded his head and listened as Shen Zhixian said, “I have something to say to you.”

He said “say” and not “discuss.” These calm words conveyed a firm meaning. “I intend to look into the matter of Yan Jin trespassing into the Hidden Sword Pavilion.”

As soon as these words came out, everyone was stunned and Song Ming's smile slipped a little.

During yesterday's chaos, Song Ming did not appear from beginning to end. But it didn't take long for him to make his judgement, proclaiming, "Yan Jin broke into the Hidden Sword Pavilion to steal the swords inside." By this point, the original Shen Zhixian had already beaten Yan Jin and ordered his punishment to the Cliff of Reflection. Soon after, he had another heart attack and was sent back to his peak.

Song Ming's heart had three points of doubts and seven points of anger, but his outer appearance remained calm. "It's clear that Yan Jin is at fault."

"Sect Leader," Shen Zhixian interrupted with a smooth smile, "yesterday, Yan Jin said that he acted against his will. I didn't think too much about it at the time and didn't ask, so I ended up punishing him first. But, after thinking about it later, I realized that it was a bit suspicious. First, Yan Jin is a calm person and wouldn't do such a ridiculous thing. Second, he always lingered on the first floor. Even the new disciples know that the swords on the first floor are very ordinary in terms of qualities. It didn't make sense that Yan Jin would take such risks for these mere swords."

What he said was a bit irrational. More to the point, there were no supportive evidence.

Song Ming thought that Shen Zhixian was satisfied with his judgement on the incident. After all, the relationship between this master and his disciple was not good. When he went to see Shen Zhixian yesterday, the latter didn't raise any objections. Why, then, did this person suddenly so disregarded his face by saying such things. Wasn't this directly slapping him in the face?!

One elder couldn't help but speak out, "Elder Shen may not know your disciple that well. Maybe he is not capable enough and could not get beyond the first floor?"

Shen Zhixian asked indifferently, "You also said that he is my disciple. As his master, shouldn't I understand him well?"

Everyone: "..."

Everyone’s heart felt a sense of absurdity. The discord between Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin was large enough for everyone to see. When had Shen Zhixian ever spoken up for his disciple?!

Understand him?

More like you know how to hit him!

Each person had their own thoughts. Song Min’s smiling expression was the model of a “good brother,” which he had maintained for so many years. As a result, he could only bear the fire in his chest and helplessly agree.

When Shen Zhixian saw him nodded, he immediately said that he was going to pick Yan Jin up from the Cliff of Reflection.

Aside from the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident, there had been no major events in the sect recently. Like the distinguished Sect Leader Song Ming, the first elder, who presided over the sect’s finance, always held himself aloof and the second elder was too busy with managing the disciples. However, the other two elders expressed their willingness to assist Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian glanced at them, thinking that the two were most likely idle and trying to see a fun show.

But, he didn’t care. The more people, the bigger the trouble, and the bigger the trouble, the more he liked it.

So, within two hours, Shen Zhixian once again stood outside Yan Jin’s cave on the Cliff of Reflection. Next to him was the two elders and several stewards.

The terrain was narrow, and everyone had to stay on the stone steps. They didn’t move forward but merely waited for Shen Zhixian to call his disciple

out.

Shen Zhixian stepped toward the shallow cave, facing away from the crowd. He calmly walked through the thick snow, stepped on the green leaf bud he had previously left behind purposefully, reached deep inside for his acting skills, adjusted his mood, took a deep breath, and called out, “A’jin!”

This cry was thickly laced with a mixture of distress and pity, care and worry. Let alone the crowd, even Yan Jin, who was unconscious, couldn’t help but shudder at this frightening cry, nearly waking up.

First, everyone: ???

Then: !!!

At last, they watched in dumbfounded astonishment as Shen Zhixian dramatically lifted the unconscious boy into his arms, turned to look at them coldly, and left behind a sentence, “This matter needs to be carefully examined,” before hurrying down the mountain.

Everyone: "...?"

What distress? Wasn’t your disciple like this because of you?!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 6

Although a particular person looked calm on the surface as he walked like the wind down the mountain, on the inside, he was panicked and anxious.

This was precisely Shen Zhixian.

Letting someone who recently fell down a flight of staircase repeatedly climb up and down a steep mountain path was simply public punishment.

He kept his eyes wide open and held his breath as he tightly held the light bamboo pole in his arms and quickly walked down the narrow path.

The two elders who followed behind watched with contented expressions. Anyway, the person wasn’t their disciple. They just came for the fun.

“Little Shen’s physical strength is really good. Holding a person but still walking so fast.”

“Young people are always so energetic."

These two elders had served the former sect leader and were Shen Zhixian’s senior master uncle. It could be said that they watched Shen Zhixian grew up and usually addressed him casually.

Shen Zhixian was originally very close to them. But, after his heart injury, his arrogance soared as high as the Heavens and he gradually distanced himself from them. When they saw this, they could only sigh helplessly.

“Today, Little Shen looked a bit like how he was before. He also seems to

have a different attitude towards his disciple.”

“It’s a little strange. I don’t know what Little Shen wants to do...But, now matter what, I still hope their master and disciple relationship would get better.”

Although they would not intervene in the affairs between master and disciples, the child Yan Jin was indeed a good one. Despite Shen Zhixian’s current situation, he could still be a good teacher.

“Forget it. Let the young people deal with it on their own. This venerable fourth elder is going to go and play chess. You should also get busy.”

Seeing that Shen Zhixian was long gone, Third Elder waved his hand and told the stewards following them to disassemble. Then, the two slipped away.

Shen Zhixian held Yan Jin all the way back, unabashedly expressing his care for his disciple. This scene fell into the eyes of many disciples, both big and small, and immediately spread.

“How could Elder Shen’s disciple’s luck turn around so fast? He was just barely punished and sent up the Cliff of Reflection, and now, a day later, he’s being carried back?”

“Isn’t their relationship always bad? Maybe Elder Shen thought of another way to torture him?”

“Who knows? It’s none of our business, anyway. We can only observe…”

Various kinds of whisper passed on to Yan Shen’s ears. His eyes darkened and his hand fell to the hilt of his sword. In the next moment, he changed his expression into a cheerful smile and paid no attention to stations as he walked over to the disciples deep in discussion “Are you discussing Senior Brother Yan Jin? What happened to him?”

Yan Shan was careful to build a good image toward other people. When the

disciples saw that it was him, they all enthusiastically welcomed him into their folds.

“Your senior brother is very fortunate. Even after breaking into the Hidden Sword Pavilion and causing such trouble, the sect leader just disregarded it.”

Naturally, it was because his master had ruthlessly used the sect leader’s good image as leverage. Yan Shen knew it well.

Speaking of Senior Brother, he was so badly injured and was driven up to the Cliff of Reflection. When he returns, his vitality was bound to be seriously wounded. When that moment comes, Yan Shan would turn the situation around. Sooner or later, the master would only have eyes for him.

“Well, you don’t have to worry anymore.” A junior disciple grinned. “Elder Shen went to bring the person down. He even personally held him!”

He exaggeratedly imitated the embrace, his pose making everyone laugh.

Yan Shen stopped, completely startled and his expression became ugly. Then, he set his mind at rest and joined in the laughter. “Senior Brother was picked up? But, that’s great!”

“Not only that, but Elder Shen personally took him back to his house.” The little senior brother, who usually got along well with Yan Shen, patted him on the shoulder and tentatively added, “A’Shen, you and Yan Jin are both Elder Shen’s personal disciples. You probably understood their relationship the best. What’s going on?”

Yan Shen shook his head. This happened too suddenly. He only just saw Master yesterday and had spoken to him about Yan Jin going to the Cliff of Reflection. Which sentence caused Shen Zhixian to suddenly go and pick Yan Jin up in person?!!

He desperately thought back and could only murmur, “I don’t know. Master may have other considerations.”

The senior brother studied him carefully to confirm that he really did not know and then laughed. “We’ll inconvenience A’Shen to visit your senior brother. Do you know? Elder Shen even said, ‘We need to carefully investigate the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident.’”

Yan Jin was not valued by Shen Zhixian, and he was treated lower than even the outer disciples. This group of people had more or less bullied him, and they were afraid that if Yan Jin suddenly rises in status, they might have trouble.

Looking into the Hidden Sword Pavilion?

Yan Shen's heart jumped. Why did Yan Jin break into the Hidden Sword Pavilion? Others didn’t know, but he was very clear. Although he was guaranteed that this would never be found out, Yan Shen still felt a cold sweat on his palms.

When he finished chatting with this group of disciples, Yan Shen turned around, his eyes immediately darkening. After thinking for a moment, he strode towards Yan Jin's residence.

…..

Shen Zhixian descended the mountain and carried Yan Jin all the way back to his residence.

Yan Jin's residence was not bad, but it was still too crude for an elder's personal disciple.

Shen Zhixian frowned. He had every intention to take good care of Yan Jin, but after thinking twice during the tiring trek down the Cliff of Reflection, he suddenly discovered a serious problem.

Qingyun Sect was the head of the four major sects.

Within such a large sect, countless people diligently sharpened their skills

every day to climb up to this central place of strength.

The heart injury only prevented him from further improvements in his cultivation, but it certainly had not turned him into a waste. He could get through without spiritual power for a day or two. But, if he ended up being a “normal person” for a long time, it might make other people suspicious. Worst, in case of danger, there’s no need to talk of taking care of Yan Jin, he was afraid he wouldn’t even be able to save himself.

Shen Zhixian was not completely helpless when it came to these mysterious things. He still had the original Shen Zhixian’s memory and knowledge. This allowed him to perform small tricks like the drunken leaves and the communication bud he had left behind with Yan Jin on the Cliff of Reflection.

But, currently, his tricks were only limited to these. He was a man who lived peacefully in the scientific world for 20 years, only to suddenly arrive to a world where he could fly around and fight with swords. He needed time to adapt!

Shen Zhixian absentmindedly lay the person on the platform bed and took out various healing medicines and elixirs. Then, he absentmindedly peeled the bamboo shoots...cough, peeled little Yan Jin’s shirt apart. .

Yan Jin: "...!"

He originally wanted to pretend to be unconscious and then wait for Shen Zhixian to leave. But now, he could only snap his eyes open, hurriedly raised his own hands to block Shen Zhixian’s hands, and coldly said, “Master.”

Shen Zhixian returned to his senses. Withdrawing his hand, he brought a fist up to his lips in a cough, acting as if nothing had happened. “You're awake. I thought you were unconscious. "

The little hedgehog Yan Jin sat up, his quill raised, and vigilantly watched Shem Zhixian for any indications of anger. After a moment, when Shen

Zhixian hadn’t done anything terrible, he tentatively settled down somewhat.

Shen Zhixian stretched out a finger and effortlessly poked the little hedgehog who was about to leave the bed. “Where do you want to run? Lie back and I’ll give you medicine.”

The little hedgehog was rigidly pushed back on the bed, and ignoring the delicate jade bottle next to him, he insisted, “I need to get something.”

What was so precious that, even when injured, he would want it first. Shen Zhixian frowned and looked at his disciple’s pale face. He picked up the medicine and shoved it into his hand, saying, “Eat it first. Where is the thing?”

Yan Jin unwillingly clutched the bottle. He tried to move again, but he couldn’t evade Shen Zhixian. Finally, he pressed his lips together and reluctantly nodded toward the humble cabinet in the corner.
Shen Zhixian followed his direction and found a shabby little bag made out of old clothing and was patched multiple times.

Yan Jin took the small bag with a blank face and dragged it towards him. Instead of opening it, he only lowered his eyes and said in a low voice, “Master must be busy. You don’t need to worry about me.”

The tone was more peaceful and not as hostile as last night. However, Shen Zhixian raised an eyebrow, fully understanding this little hedgehog’s meaning.

——Hurry up and get out of here. Leave me alone.

However, it was impossible for him to leave. He doesn't want to be tortured in the future.

Shen Zhixu had never coaxed a child before. His heart felt as if thousands of marmots were stampeding on it, but he could only try to put on a kind

and amiable smile. His tone was soft and gentle as he said, “There’s no hurry. First, let me take a look at your Injury. Come, take off your clothes. "

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 7

The atmosphere became awkward.

In that moment, Yan Jin couldn’t suppressed his alarmed and angry expression. This even made Shen Zhixian felt that he himself was a beast in human clothing and was coercing a little girl into doing something indescribable.

The marmots moved up from his heart to his head, where they set up a symphony orchestra.

Shen Zhixian maintained a stiff smile and determined that he was just a sincere and compassionate master. But, Little Hedgehog Yan still rejected his kindness.

He sighed.

They compromised and Yan Jin’s robe was only stripped halfway down. In fact, that top was tattered and was unable to block Shen Zhixian from seeing that his faintly exposed skin had new wounds and old wounds layered on top of each other and were smeared with bloodstain. The sight made Shen Zhixian panicked a little.

He no longer forced the issue. After taking a few steps back, he said, “In a moment, I’ll invite one of Fourth Elder’s disciple to come and take a look at you.”

The Fourth Elder was in charge of internal affairs, but he also specialized in refining medicine. Most of his disciples knew how to heal and often helped

injuries in the sect.

Yan Jin didn’t agree nor did he refused. Instead, he quietly watched Shen Zhixian leave before slowly bowing his head to look at the bottles of medicine left behind.

Then, with the back of his hand, he pushed them off the bed. The jade bottles were finely made and quite sturdy. They didn’t break when they handed on the ground, only making crisp sounds as they rolled to a stop.

Who knew what terrible tricks Shen Zhixian was planning with these things. He didn’t dare to use them.

The pale youth indifferently opened the small bag in his hand. Inside were a few rough and worn porcelain bottles, some of which had cracks on them.

After lifting the bottle cap, the smell that came out was not pungent, but it wasn’t quite unpleasant either.

Yan Jin took off his top, expressionlessly tilted the porcelain bottle to pour out a little sticky black ointment, and tried to apply the medicine to himself in an awkward posture.

……..

When Yan Shen arrived, he saw Fourth Elder’s two disciples outside.

Seeing him, the two junior disciples’s eyes flashed and they quickly grabbed him. “Oh, Senior Brother Yan Shen, you came at just the right time. Elder Shen asked us to help look at Senior Brother Yan Jin's wound but Senior Brother Yan Jin won’t let us in. He seemed to be seriously injured…”

Yan Shen smiled. “I was worried about my senior brother and came to check up on him. You can rest assured that I’ll take good care of him.”

“Good!” The little disciple placed a small package of medicine and gauze

into his hand and said, “Elder Shen sent this.”

Yan Shen thanked them and said goodbye. Carrying the small parcel, he symbolically knocked on the door two times before, without waiting for a response, simply pushing inside.

The jade bottles on the ground were still in a mess while Yan Jin sat on the couch, retying his clothes. He seemed to have become accustomed to people entering his room without invitation. He only raised his eyes to look at Yan Shen coldly and, within those dark eyes, no emotions could be seen.

Yan Shen hated his expression, as if nothing could cause a ripple in those eyes. It made him want to immediately tear that calm mask off and throw it on the ground to crush it.

He gritted his teeth and displayed a false smile. “I haven’t congratulated Senior Brother from getting off the Cliff of Reflection. Senior Brother has always been lucky and can even be forgiven for making such a big mistake.”

Yan Jin indifferently said, “I hope Junior Brother would also have such good luck next time.

Yan Shen’s hands tightened on the small parcel, feeling a little surprised that Yan Jin would actually talk back to him. In the past, Yan Jin would usually ignore him.

He took a step forward and his toes nudged against a jade bottle on the floor. Lowering his head, he saw that it was a bottle of medicine only available to Shen Zhixian.

With the little disciples words still ringing in his ears, jealousy and hatred burst hotly in his heart. He stooped down to pick up the small bottle, his thumb rubbing against the bottle’s smooth, cold surface. “Senior Brother, since you don’t need these medicines, how about gifting them to me? Just recently, whenever I practice my swordplay, I would often get injured.”

Yan Jin wanted to ignore him but, seeing the bottle passing by while in the other person's hand, he suddenly paused and unexpectedly said, "If you're not good at sword training, then next time when I see Master, I'll ask for some medicine for you."

"You!" Yan Shen's enraged face turned green, then red, then black.

Yan Jin admired his changing complexion for a while. In the past, when Yan Shen and other disciples came to trouble him, he was indifferent. Today, he realized that the occasional argument might result in quite interesting outcomes.

The pressure he felt around Shen Zhixian gradually dissipated like smoke.

It was too bad that he was a quiet loner who would rather not bother with the lot of them. He turned over his wrist, gesturing for the other person to leave.

The hand that held the medicine bottle tightened until the fingertips turned white. Yan Jin's reaction today was too unexpected. Had Master said something to him?

He couldn't figure out what Yan Jin meant by saying "request some medicine from Master for you," and it took him a moment to hatefully said, "Still, Senior Brother needs to carefully consider matters. I heard that Master wants to check into the Hidden Sword Pavilion. It's better for Senior Brother to admit his wrongs early, lest he finally lose face."

The last sentence was soft and slow, the threat within clearly self-evident.

When he mentioned the Hidden Sword Pavilion, Yan Jin's expression immediately darkened, his hands clenching into fists and his dark eyes reflected with a cold light.

Yan Shen snorted coldly as he threw the small bag and the jade bottle on the bed, not caring if they hit Yan Jin or not. Then, he left without looking back,

slamming the door behind him. His footsteps withdrew into the night.

Once peace was restored, Yan Jin touched his bare left wrist, which no longer had his treasure.

He couldn’t protect himself then, and he still couldn’t protect himself now, just as it used to be.

His cold eyes darkened as his heart became more determined to become stronger and more powerful. He stared down at the medicine bottles on the floor. After picking them up one by one, he stuffed them into the small bag sent by Shen Zhixian and then hurled them randomly into a corner of the room.

.....

After telling Fourth Elder’s disciples to take a look at Yan Jin, Shen Zhixian returned to the house, stumbled through putting a restraint on his surroundings, and began to practice sorcery...ahem, magical techniques.

Of course, there were some memories he could rely on. Common techniques such as cleansing could be successful after practicing once or twice. This body was indeed a genius for cultivation. It was unfortunate that the heart injury cut off more possibilities.

Shen Zhixian laid his sword on the table and carefully studied it.

Qingyun Sect taught heavy sword techniques and light sword techniques. Shen Zhixian practiced the latter. As a result, his swordplay was mostly light, quick, and nimble. Therefore, his Frost Sword was thinner than normal.

The sword was probably forged by a blacksmith whose temperament was as gentle as the spring breeze. From the hilt to the scabbard, the lines were delicate and gentle. When the sword was pulled out of the sheath, the sword’s body was like jade, suffused by a warm light.

Shen Zhixian waved it back and forth over and over again, feeling that this sword was like delicate jade. But, if it was used in an actual fight...He considered it and carefully swept the blade against the hard corner of a nearby table.

It sliced through the table corner as effortlessly as cutting off a piece of hair, requiring no strength at all. The table corner fell to the floor with a muted sound. Shen Zhixian looked at the sword in his hand, then at the table corner on the floor. He swallowed nervously and carefully slid the sword back into its sheath.

Since he could still remember the sword techniques the original Shen Zhixian had learned, he needed to find a secret place and practice his swordplay.

He just thought of this when a dull, clattering noise suddenly sounded from outside. Since this was the body of a cultivator, his hearing was different from ordinary people. This tiny sound was easy to hear and difficult to ignore.

After this quiet sound came a knock at the door, as if the wind was blowing a tree branch against the hard wood.

The dull knocking went on for a while until, as if its strength had been exhausted, it finally stopped. But, after resting for a while, it persistently began again.

What kind of person could easily pass through his restraint without being perceived by him?

Shen Zhixian asked, “Who's there?” but no one responded. The knocking paused for a moment. When it came again, the knocking came heavier and faster, as if the person on the other side was growing angry.

Shen Zhixian muttered to himself. Pushing one hand into his sleeve, with fingers arranged into a hand-seal just in case he needed to defend himself, he used the other hand to yank open the door.

There was nobody there.

A breeze blew past his feet, shaking the hem of his robe. Shen Zhixian suddenly became aware of something and looked down.

A hint of green came into view.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 8

"Bud sprout? Bud sprout!"

These past few days had been extremely tiresome for Shen Zhixian.

Even if he had to deal with Yan Jin and feigned politeness with Song Ming, these matters had not been extremely tiresome. At least these people were living, breathing individuals who could understand and communicate with him.

“Chirp!”

The tiny bud with dark green grass-like leaves sprouting from the top of his head was a startling sight. It enthusiastically stared at Shen Zhixian and extended a tiny leaflet hand toward it’s head, as if asking for his tangled mess of grassy hair to be meticulously combed.

Shen Zhixian took a deep breath and lifted the bud sprout by the top of his head. Resisting the urge to rub the tiny thing into a dumpling and throw it away, he controlled his facial expression so it wouldn’t look too sinister. He said through clenched teeth, “Next time, don’t ask me to let you nest on top of my head again.”

He was a normal big man, and he didn’t want this green thing on his head at all!

The tiny grass bud in his palm shook his grass blades like an obedient child and innocently chirped.

“All you do is chirp, chirp, chirp. Are you a little sparrow…” Shen Zhixian muttered as he looked around. Then, after putting the thing in his hand into a porcelain bottle, he warned, “I’m going to practice. You’re not allowed to come out.”

“Chirp, chirp, chirp!” The little grass bud probably didn’t like being compared to a little sparrow. It immediately changed its tone and twisted around in the porcelain bottle until a crack appeared in the middle and the bottle shattered into pieces.

Having regained its freedom, the little grass bud cheered happily and swayed on thin roots toward Shen Zhixian. Grasping his clothes, it climbed up very flexibly, it’s long, grassy hair swaying with every move.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He expressionlessly picked up the little grass bud, expressionlessly opened the door, and expressionlessly dug out a small pit in the ground by the door.

He dropped the little grass bud in, covered it with soil, and even went so far as to cast an incantation spell to prevent the bud from easily slipping out.

After doing this, Shen Zhixian closed the door and went back to his room to think and practice. He recently found a lot of books and was looking through them for knowledge to practice seriously.

The little grass bud struggled in the pit for a while and found that he couldn’t really get out. It was startled and increased it’s struggles, but to no avail.

It muttered angrily, its leaves covered in mud, and pulled its roots hard.

Shen Zhixian listened to it angrily chirping outside, feeling a little funny and a bit helpless.

He didn’t expect that the grass bud he had bespelled and placed on the Cliff of Reflection that day would actually have such a great ability. Instead of freezing to death on the cliff, it scurried down to find him and refused to leave.

Why a grass bud? At that time, in addition to the fragile dead leaves, Zhen Zhixian could only control this grass bud.

As he continued to read and practice, he suddenly realized after a while that there was no sound outside.

This little grass bud was very magical and would make all kinds of strange sounds. As long as it wasn’t sleeping, it would make a lot of noise. Why was it so quiet now?

Even the mud here was full of spiritual aura. There was no harm in planting it there. Could this little guy struggle too much and hurt himself?

Shen Zhixian was a little worried. He lowered the scroll and quietly went to the door to check up on it. At this moment, he saw the little grass bud struggling to pull the last of its roots out. It turned back to looked back at him angrily.

It stretched out its leaflet arms and the breeze suddenly lifted it up into the air, carrying it away. Shen Zhixian was shocked and, unwilling to let it be exposed to other people, pursed his lips and chased after it, shouting, “Grass Bud!”

The little grass bud was really angry. Rely on its own small leaflets and tiny grass sprouts, it flew faster and faster with the wind. It knew how to avoid being seen by people, primarily to prevent having young disciples from discovering it and chasing it about.

Shen Zhixian came to a stop when he saw some young disciples up ahead. He hurriedly dealt with the disciples’ courtesy but, by then, the little grass bud had already slipped away at a corner.

He had no choice but to look for it in that general direction, and as he walked, he realized that this road was familiar. Wasn’t this near Yan Jin’s residence?

As the fifth elder, Shen Zhixian had a main peak all to himself. He stayed at the top, followed by his personal disciples, then ordinary disciples toward the bottom.

These self-disciplined ordinary disciples directly worshiped the name of Shen Zhixian and were happy to get his personal guidance. But, in truth, they were disciples in name only. They practiced and learned in unified ways with no special treatments or instructions. They also usually helped with some chores. In Qingyun Sect, the disciples must take care of their own necessities.

The sound of trickling water reach Shen Zhixian, and he realized that this was where the disciples draw their water.

Shen Zhixian didn’t think must about it. He took a turn, lifted his eyes, and froze.

A skinny teenager, wearing a worn and faded moon white gown, stood with his back to Shen Zhixian. He was fetching water, drawing the heavy buckets full of water one by one.

Then, the teen turned around and came face to face with Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian looked at him in disbelief and glanced down at the buckets he was carrying. These chores were supposed to be completed by ordinary disciples. Since Yan Jin was his personal disciple, why did he have to do them himself?

They looked at each other in silence, until a bit of green flashed and the little grass bud emerged from the bushes next to Shen Zhixian, happily running toward Yan Jin.

WTF?!!

Yan Jin quick reflex jerked into motion before he could think. He raised his hand and a whole bucket of water splashed onto the grass bud, who was rooted in shock. The impact of the water pushed it to the ground, with leaflets and grass sprouts fluttering.

Mud splashed on to the small leaves. The now even dirtier grass bud laid stiff on the ground, motionless and still in shock.

Shen Zhixian looked at the bud’s angry little face and was about to laugh and then speak, when a disciple appeared and angrily marched up to Yan Jin.

"Yan Jin! Why are you so slow?! Senior Brother Yan Shen is in a hurry to use it. Ahh! How did you make such a mess! Are you a waste?!"

The young disciple probably heard noises and promptly ran to harrass Yan Jin with curses at the ready. Seeing the mess on the ground, he could not help but become angry and wanted to scold the person. Suddenly, a gust of wind rose and along with it came a flash of green.

A loud slap resounded.

After landing a perfect strike, the little grass bud flew toward Shen Zhixian and buried itself in his sleeves, only exposing the tip of a small leaf to watch the excitement.

The disciple’s cheek quickly turned red and swollen. He felt as if he had been slapped hard. But he didn’t see anything!

Being messed with in front of Yan Jin, he felt as if he had lost face. Turning around angrily, he said, “Who is being unbridled here? See if I can’t handle you—“

The angry voice came to an abrupt end.

Shen Zhixian lifted his gaze, shook his sleeves calmly, the motion turning the spooky little grass bud upside down, and murmured quietly, "What do you want to do with this elder? Say it. This elder will listen.”

Xixi: If you're as confused as I was about the chain of events here, it appeared that there's a time skip of a few days between the previous chapter and this chapter. So, the grass bud had been with Shen Zhixian for a few days now.

Also, too bad Yan Jin was reborn before he completely darkened. That would have been an interesting story. He would have probably turned these disciples wanting to bully him into mincemeat. But then, I guess we would have a different kind of male lead.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 9

Even though Shen Zhixian secretly ridiculed his lofty title as “Elder,” especially considering his current lack of skills and the fact that it just didn’t suit him, this time he had no choice but to use his position to intimidate other people.

The disciple knelt on the wet ground with a splash, his face flushed and his eye full of fears. He was too afraid to even make a sound.

Yan Jin silently picked up the overturned wooden bucket, turned, and was about to fetch water again when he heard Shen Zhixian’s voice said, “Put it down.”

Soon after, a gentle force stayed his hand, stopping him from dropping the bucket into the well to draw water.

“Come here.”

Yan Jin obediently placed the bucket on the stone wall but didn’t walk over immediately. In his eyes, being near Shen Zhixian was worse than drawing water daily for Yan Shen.

However, after more than a year of apprenticeship, he knew enough to realize that Shen Zhixian was a person who valued his face the most. He would not want to lose face in front of a little disciple.

Yan Jin pursed his lips and moved over step by step, slow as a snail. He

stopped with some distance between himself and Shen Zhixian, bowed his head respectfully, and greeted, “Master.”

Shen Zhixian just wanted to call him over and had no other plans. The spring breeze was a little chilly, and due to Yan Jin’s injury, it would not do for him to stay out too long in the cold.

Luckily, he had been practicing the techniques for cleaning and drying clothes. As a result, Yan Jin was surprised to find that his wet sleeves suddenly became dried.

Shen Zhixian turned away from his personal disciple and asked, “Who told Yan Jin to fetch water?”

The junior disciple was too afraid to speak coherently. “Yes, it’s Senior Brother Yan Shen...Ah, no. It’s me…”

Realizing that this might make people misunderstand Senior Brother Yan Shen, he quickly stuttered, “Senior Brother Yan Shen told me to fetch water...I...I was too lazy and told Yan...Senior Brother Yan Jin...This has nothing to do with Senior Brother Yan Shen...”

Shen Zhixian’s eyes slightly narrowed. It seemed as if this little disciple was afraid of involving Yan Shen.

Yan Shen.

Even at such a young age, he still managed to become very popular.

This was probably not the first time that Yan Jin was made to draw water for Yan Shen. But, looking at the situation, it wouldn’t be easy for Shen Zhixian to discover how else they were making life difficult for Yan Jin. What's more, Shen Zhixian had a hard time believing that Yan Shen knew nothing about this. In fact, it was more likely that Yan Shen contributed to the situation in secret.

This was due to his negligence. After sending Yan Jin back that day, he only instructed people to send medicine everyday while he focused on mastering some necessary techniques. As a result, he hadn’t seen Yan Jin in a while.

Shen Zhixian’s voice was slightly cold as he said, “In recent days, Wen Valley cornfield lacked people. Please clean up and go help.”

As a large sect, it was only natural to have a long-term collaboration with others in order to maintain a steady source of food. Wen Valley was one of them. It specialized in producing spirit rice. Recently, they were unable to find enough people to harvest rice and came to ask the sect for help.

The junior disciple turned pale. This was equivalent to a short banishment. There were countless disciples in the sect. Everyone worked hard everyday to climb up the peak of Taoism. As a result, one less day of practicing meant falling behind many others.

But he dared not refuse. Shen Zhixian’s dark temperament was famous in the sect. He could even whip his personal disciple three times, let alone a regular junior disciple...

He didn’t speak and could only accept the order. His hands and feet shook as he withdrew.

As soon as the irrelevant person retreated, the little grass bud immediately rolled out of Shen Zhixian’s sleeve, stretched out his small leaflets, and flung himself at Yan Jin without resentment.

Yan Jin dared not touch Shen Zhixian’s things. The water bath could be explained as unintentional, but if he didn’t avoid it now...The small grass bud saw that he was about to shift aside. Not holding back, it slightly stepped on the ground and jumped up sideways, managing to flutter on to Yan Jin’s sleeve.

Shen Zhixian noticed Yan Jin’s small movements, but he was too amused by the little grass bud. This little guy was really too much. In the past few days, Shen Zhixian had been raising it and even allowed it to drink his

expensive medicinal waters. The outcome was that his efforts only resulted in betrayal!

He was about to speak, but then his eyes suddenly caught a hint of blood staining the fabric on Yan Jin's shoulder. The wound from the punishing whip.

Although Shen Zhixian had not personally visited Yan Jin these past few days, he still conscientiously requested that Fourth Elder’s young disciples provide Yan Jin with daily medicines for his injury. The wound caused by the punishing whip may not be easy to deal with but many days had already passed. At this point, the wound shouldn't have broken open so easily.

The words Shen Zhixian was about to say trailed off. Finally, he only said, “Follow me,” before promptly turning around and walking away.

The young man behind him hesitated for a moment but still followed some distance away, his body language cautious and defensive. When Shen Zhixian purposefully slowed down, Yan Jin stopped, unwilling to shorten the distance between them.

The little grass bud pulled and moved around on his sleeves, unaware of the tense atmosphere.

Shen Zhixian felt some helplessness. Probably, this time, the punishment must have really broken Yan Jin’s heart. The little hedgehog kept stabbing him with thorns. Shen Zhixian didn’t know when Yan Jin would relax enough to show his soft belly for him to poke.

He imagined what Yan Jin would be like without his obvious hostility and couldn’t help but become lost in thought. When he read the book, Shen Zhixian had liked the protagonist very much. He was silent and forbearing early in the novel. But, the grief in the latter half of the novel caused his heart to blacken, turning him into a devil with long black hair and blood-red eyes.

This made Shen Zhixian felt a bit duplicitous.

At this moment, he was no longer a good brother praying for the protagonist. Instead, he only wanted to completely wash himself clean in Yan Jin's heart. Regardless of whether Yan Jin's path was smooth, or whether he blackened and walked the path of the devil, Shen Zhixian only asked Yan Jin to liquidate and pull him out of the old account.

It was too scary to do anything else.

Yan Jin was the protagonist and was destined to experience much wind and rain in the future. Shen Zhixian was only a small supporting character with a heart injury. Therefore, he should leisurely follow his own path.

As Shen Zhixian was still pondering over this matter, a sense of dizziness suddenly swept over him. His vision darkened, his steps faltered, and his body slanted backward.

Fortunately, he happened to be walking past a tree, and he instinctively reached out to support himself against the tree trunk, using it to stabilize his body.

He wasn't aware that when he staggered, Yan Jin, who was a few steps away from him, hurriedly took a few more steps back, his face displaying suspicion and one thought: What just happened?

This time, the vertigo came suddenly and left just as quickly. Shen Zhixian sluggishly closed his eyes for a moment, calming himself down. But, there was still a faint palpitation in his chest.

A heart attack?

But, the heart attack were only supposed to happen occasionally. He only came back just a few days ago and hadn't even done anything to provoke it. How could it happen for no reason?

Shen Zhixian couldn't think of a reason, and remembering that Yan Jin was still behind him, he coughed, pulled back his hand as if nothing had

happened, and glanced back, saying, “Let’s go.”

In the courtyard where Shen Zhixian lived, there was a small empty house next to his home.

Yan Jin watched as Shen Zhixian instructed two disciples to pick up and sort out the small empty house nearer to the path. His heart jumped with a bad premonition.

Sure enough, in the next instant, this hunch became a reality.

“This house is just sitting empty. You can move here.” Shen Zhixian pretended to casually watch the two junior disciples but closely watched Yan Jin’s facial expression from the corner of his eyes. “As for the teacher...heh, I’ll take care of you.”

With their close proximity, there’s no way he couldn’t increase his favorability status!

Shen Zhixian’s idea was so beautiful that when he saw Yan Jin's face slightly changed, seeming obviously very reluctant to accept, he quickly interrupted, “Enter. Let’s take a look at your injury.”

The youth pressed his lips tightly together and remained unmoving, his hands subconsciously fisted defensively. He even ignored the little grass bud, who had crawled up his sleeve to his shoulder and was crying, “Chirp, chirp, chirp.”

Shen Zhixian looked at him, and the corners of his mouth tipped up into a slight smile.

Since transmigrating, Shen Zhixian was a bit disgusted with the tear-shaped birthmark under his left eye. Because it annoyed him, he had also deliberately used the past few days to practice his facial expressions in order to reduce the impact of the birthmark.

It was a bit effective. But, when he smiled, all his previous efforts came to

nothing. The tear-shaped birthmark would vividly rise along with his cheeks, like a moon breaking through clouds, and instantly turning his already handsome face into astonishing beauty.

Yan Jin had never seen Shen Zhixian smile at him, not like this. At this moment, he looked at Yan Jin like he was a beautiful monster that could capture people’s soul with a mere smile.

He stared in stunned silence.

Then, in the next moment, Shen Zhixian’s smile slipped. He dropped his sleeves and took a step towards Yan Jin, saying in a conscientious and firm voice, “This big child, still so disobedient. Are you coercing Master to carry you in?”

Xixi:

Yan Jin and Yan Shen are not related. Their last names are different in the Chinese script. The Yan in Yan Jin's name means quiet, while the Yan in Yan Shen's name means stern or severe. To mitigate any confusions, I'll be writing out their names in full, even when they're being addressed by just their last name.

Also, henceforth, the little grass bud will be written as Xiao Caoya, which is the literal pinyin for Little Grass Bud.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 10

In the end, Shen Zhixian didn’t have to carry his little hedgehog disciple inside. He was too afraid that if he really did hug him, he would be ran through on the spot. No way was he willing to enter the hornet’s nest.

Relieved, Shen Zhixian happily opened up his little disciple’s thin top, then his heart immediately sank.

The wound was even worse than he thought.

The residual chill from the punishing whip lingered on the wound, and the pitch-black accumulation of blood piled over the laceration, making it look even more ghastly. Dark-red blood oozed out of the cracked scab, dispelling the medicinal ointment.

This ointment was a common one, with a subtle scent and a poor rate of effectiveness. In terms of quality, it was light-years away from the first-class elixir he’d sent. In these past few days, Yan Jin must have been using this ointment instead, which explained why his wound was not healing.

Shen Zhixian soaked a gauze in a special liquid medicine before carefully using it to clean the wound. As soon as the fabric touched the skin, Yan Jin trembled slightly, his muscles tightening. The motion caused the wound to flex, and soon after, the blood began to flow more freely.

Shen Zhixian gently patted his arm with his other hand and said in a soothing tone, “Relax.”

The gauze quickly became stained with blood. The treatment was very painful and Shen Zhixian was worried that Yan Jin wouldn't be able to endure. He deliberately chatted as a means of distracting him. “Where’s the bud sprout? Still attached to you? It’s strange how this little guy suddenly became so intimate with you.”

As Shen Zhixian spoke, Yan Jin lightly and cautiously murmured in agreement, his back muscles tightening.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He admitted that he was working hard to distribute goodwill! What the hell did the original Shen Zhixian do to make this youth behave like this?!

Shen Zhixian helplessly became silent. Originally, he wanted to ask Yan Jin why he didn’t use the elixir he’d sent. Now that he thought about it, it was probably because Yan Jin was afraid to use it.

He was afraid that Shen Zhixian was tricking him.

After wrapping the bandages around and around his disciple, Shen Zhixia tied the two ends together into a knot. Once finished, he got up to clean his hand. Reaching into his storage, he pulled out Yan Jin’s brocade band.

Throughout this entire thing, Yan Jin had been silent and forbearing.

Shen Zhixian called, “A’jin.”

Then, taking a deep breath, he passed the band to the youth, solemnly saying, “I’m sorry.”

Yan Jin saw the familiar brocade ribbon and his body began to tremble. He could barely resist the urge to snatch the ribbon away. Once it was in his hand, he carefully studied the piece of cloth before finally determining that it was the one he'd lost. Relief swept through him. Then, at last, he finally reacted to the words--What did Shen Zhixian say?

In the silence, Yan Jin tightly clutched his newly recovered ribbon, feeling as if the situation was completely absurd.

Sorry.

Shen Zhixian had apologized to him.

What were you sorry about? Sorry for all the past things, or have you devised a new way to torture me, or…

Yan Jin turned his head and looked at Shen Zhixian. His black eyes were mocking, the emotion so slight that it could be easily overlooked. His voice came out slow and subdued, “Master, have you been possessed?”

Shen Zhixian: "..."

Good heavens, how can the protagonist be so sharp?!

With some difficulties, he opened his mouth in denial. “Possessed? How can this be possible…”

After a short pause, he resolutely added, “The Master had been thinking a lot over the past few days. I admit that, in the past, I’d behaved excessively, but I won’t do it again.”

He said this with the most serious and sincere attitude. Recently, by personally bring this person down the Cliff of Reflection, by giving him his ribbon back, by making sure he had the best medicine, Shen Zhixian had been working very hard to wash himself clean...

After listening to what he had to say, Yan Jin shrugged back into his top and expressed his disbelief with silence.

Three feet of ice could not form in a day, and thawing would take more than a matter of a moment. Shen Zhixian frantically comforted himself in his heart, resisting the urge to hug the youth and wail for forgiveness.

It didn’t matter. The situation wasn’t completely hopeless. After all, it'd only been a year since the original Shen Zhixian accepted Yan Jin as his personal disciple. The only terrible thing that he’d done was the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident. Other than that, his faults were his indifference and his indulgence toward Yan Shen and the other disciples’ bad treatment of Yan Jin.

He hadn’t yet done the most extreme and cruelest thing; he hadn’t severed Yan Jin’s spirit root. Shen Zhixian remembered that this punishment was exacted soon after Yan Jin’s return from the Cliff of Reflection. Fortunately, he’d transmigrated over before it happened. Otherwise, it would have been too late.

It was good timing. Right before things got worse.

Shen Zhixian quietly sighed. Thinking of the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident gave him a headache.

He’d been paying close attention to the Hidden Sword Pavilion, but Yan Shen had cleaned up his trail too quickly and cleanly. He’d only arrived and so he hadn’t yet been able to figure out the background of various people. His demand to re-investigate the matter was simply blowing hot air.

This matter was doomed to come to nothing--at least, for now.

Shen Zhixian felt that he was the worst scumbag. Right after apologizing, he now had to tell the other party that he couldn’t figure out his grievances.

He hesitated as he thought about how to phrase his words, when Yan Jin reacted, saying, “This disciple’s lowly life doesn’t matter. Master needn’t worry.”

Shen Zhixian listened to Yan Jin’s self-deprecating words, and his brows furrowed. “Don’t talk nonsense. You’re very good.”

“What good?” The youth asked. His eyes had a slight irony, making people

wonder whether he was being sarcastic or self-deprecating.

Shen Zhixian was at a loss for words. But, Yan Jin was the protagonist. What is the protagonist? The protagonist is undoubtedly very good! Even a strand of the protagonist’s fallen hair can be considered a treasure too!

While Shen Zhixian was speechless, Yan Jin silently stood as if there was nothing more to say. After bowing respectfully, he turned to leave.

Shen Zhixian subconsciously reached out to grab his arm, but Yan Jin was already quietly guarding against him and immediately sidestepped to calmly avoid him. Shen Zhixian ended up pulling on his sleeve instead.

His strength was not weak, and Yan Jin’s collar slipped, revealing his thin collar bone with its delicate arc. This instantly attracted Shen Zhixian’s eyes.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He quickly retracted his hand, coughing as a cover, and blurted out under Yan Jin's silent gaze, “It’s good...good-looking.”

Yan Jin: "..."

Yan Jin: "?"

He froze for a moment, then walked toward the door without a backward glance.

As for Shen Zhixian...Shen Zhixian’s face flushed red. He just wanted to crawl underneath his blanket and pretend to die.

He watched as Yan Jin walked out and, still wanting to help him, added vaguely, “Come back at night…”

Before he could finish speaking, he saw Yan Jin’s steps suddenly quickened, and he was gone in a flash.

“...so I could re-apply the medicine,” he finished slowly and then deeply sighed.

The young disciples had made quick work of their tasks and cleaned the small, empty house. When they were about to come over to look for Shen Zhixian, they saw Yan Jin stepped out of Shen Zhixian’s house.

His clothes were somewhat disheveled and his face was pale. One of the disciples clearly saw that the tips of his ears were slightly red.

Disciple: "... Ah?"

The two young disciples were new, and they were very curious about everything. They didn’t know much about the contradictions between master and disciple, and their hearts, which were still contaminated by the secular world, longed for gossip.

Watching Yan Jin enter his new home without saying a word, the two disciples looked at each other, their expressions curious.

Xixi: Bahahaha! Poor misunderstood Shen Zhixian. Yan Jin had now probably check-marked "Pervert" under his master's long list of sins.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 11

As Shen Zhixian had guessed, the Hidden Sword Pavilion affair was put to rest despite the lack of an outcome.

Yan Jin still carried the blame, and even Shen Zhixian was criticized by the sect’s disciples.

Song Ming knew this and even intentionally condoned it.

Shen Zhixian had repeatedly refuted him in front of others and did not give him any face. Song Ming could do nothing but pretend to tolerate him while swallowing a bellyful of fire. Even if this situation was unable shake Shen Zhixian from his perch, at least Song Ming could also gain some small satisfaction from it.

The little disciples became more active in their discussions, and all kinds of strange gossips and rumors arose.

“Recently, Elder Shen seemed to be very fond of Senior Brother Yan Jin.”

“I also heard that Elder Shen personally moved him to the summit of his peak, and now he’s living next to Elder Shen’s house.”

“How did Senior Brother Yan Jin manage to succeed in soaring up to the sky?”

These ordinary disciples were unable to directly call Shen Zhixian their master. As a result, they could only pretend to be friendly to Senior Brother

Yan Jin while gossiping about all kinds of things about him behind his back.

“Now that I think about it, it’s been a while since Senior Brother Yan Shen went up to the summit.”

“Elder Shen avoided his daily greetings and hadn’t instructed him in swordsmanship in a long time now.”

"Ah? Is it like that? I'll just say ... "

"Okay, lower your voice. Senior Brother Yan Shen might be nearby. "

Someone soared up, and someone was trampled. In this world, this kind of thing happened all the time. Why else would these young disciples flatter Yan Shen in the past? Now, they had to switch target and try to earn Yan Jin’s goodwill.

Yan Shen was hidden behind the shadow of a tree, watching as these disciples walked by, gossiping, until they disappeared. His face was as dark as the bottom of a pot, his cheerful temperament of the past completely gone. The hand on the tree’s trunk pressed down hard, leaving behind clear fingerprints on the rough bark.

Yan Jin!

He grinded his teeth back and forth, his dark mood trickling bit by bit, like poisonous mushrooms growing in a secret corner.

After an unknown amount of time, he flicked his sleeves and headed in a certain direction without looking back.

It was not the way back to his house, nor to the training field, nor to any place his should go.

.....

Shen Zhixian, who was the subject of all kinds of discussions, was very calm. He didn’t care about the gossips about himself. He was more worried about whether Yan Jin would mind it.

As a result, Shen Zhixian began to try to coax a certain person.

However, Yan Jin was extremely guarded against him. Every time he appeared, the young man’s whole body would instantly tense up and his spirit would tighten, as if it were a string that was being stretched to the extreme and would snap with a single touch.

Shen Zhixian felt that his position in Yan Jin’s heart was probably not as good as that of the rebellious grass bud.

At least that grass bud only had to pester Yan Jin several times before it finally got permission to swing freely on his sleeve.

Shen Zhixian decided to use a roundabout tactic to soften and appease.

This 16-year-old child’s heart will surely soften!

Shen Zhixian used his finger to count the items in the room.

A medicinal pot from Fourth Elder meant for purifying the spirit root; a large batch of high quality brocade cloth; fifth peak’s new dishes…

This elder, who was not short on money, waved his hand. Buy buy buy! Do do do! Eat eat eat!

The young disciple accepted the spirit stones and very respectfully backed out the door. Before leaving, he quietly looked toward Yan Jin, who was practicing his swordplay in the yard.

Yan Jin’s movement was powerful. He circled his sword around his body, then noticed the disciple’s gaze, and stopped to look back at him calmly.

“Hello, Senior Brother Yan!” Feeling as if he’d been seen by a spirit, Ming Yi could only straighten and call out.

He was one of the two disciples that had been summoned by Shen Zhixian to clean up the house that day. The other disciple was called Ming Li. Perhaps because they were quick and nimble, they caught Shen Zhixian’s eyes and were promoted into running errands for him.

After the two disciples went down the mountain that day, they donated pocket money and small snacks to ask their fellow brothers and sisters about Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin.

Then, they at once became stunned stupid.

Elder Shen and Senior Brother Yan Jin have a bad relationship?

Senior Brother Yan Jin suffered such a serious injury from Elder Shen?

Elder Shen's favorite disciple was Senior Brother Yan Shen?

No, they clearly feel that Elder Shen and Brother Yan Jin had a good relationship!

As for Senior Brother Yan Jin...Even though they had just arrived and hadn’t had much contact with him, they still saw him every day.

Seeing Elder Shen’s attitude, it was clear that he valued Senior Brother Yan Jin very much. Every day, he would have things delivered to Senior Brother Yan. The fruits must be the sweetest, the vegetables the freshest, and the meat with the utmost quality, even sending up plates of fragrant steamed bun and repeatedly instructing that they be kneaded into various shapes.

Purportedly, in order to permit Senior Brother Yan Jin to eat more.

The disciples all said that Elder Shen was no good but they clearly felt that Elder Shen was...kind of cute.

Ming Yi also wanted to be a personal disciple, and he also wanted to eat pig-shaped little buns. He was even born in the year of the pig! Therefore, he cleverly stood in front of Yan Jin, holding a bag of spirit stones. It was unfortunate that he was too average. With Senior Brother Yan in front, Elder Shen would probably wouldn't even take a second glance at him. Therefore, he might as well foster a good relationship with Senior Brother Yan!

Perhaps, Senior Brother Yan would also ask him to eat a pig-shaped bum when he was happy.

"Senior Brother Yan, would you like some water?"

Yan Jin shook his head awkwardly and politely as he sincerely declined. His gaze quickly swept over the bag of spirit stones before sifting away to look down at his sword in hand.

Ming Yi said "goodbye" and went away happily.

As soon as he left, the silence soon returned. The little grass bud, Xiao Caoya, was asleep and rarely came out to make noises. Yan Jin condensed the sword in his hand, his eyes moody and unclear.

This was about the time that the event in the previous life happened.

But, today's Shen Zhixian was completely different from the Shen Zhixian of his past memory. Masters in various appearances repeatedly appeared in his mind, and he often pondered day and night, completely unable to guess Shen Zhixian's thoughts.

In these past days, living here had been pure torture. He closed his eyes and when he finally opened them, his eyes were dark-red. The scent of blood drifted over his nostrils, and with it, came the vision of Shen Zhixian's blood-stained hand indifferently gripping his wrist.

Agonizing pain radiated from his spirit root, and Yan Jin's consciousness fragmented. The hand holding the sword hilt tightened until the fingertips turned white.

When the sword flashed out of the sheath, it emitted a sharp, cold light.

It was obviously only an ordinary sword. But, in Yan Jin’s hand, the sword released a bitingly cold chill. As he practiced, his swordplay was radically different from the previous times.

His eyes had completely turned blood red, the color tainting his vision of everything around him and making his nerves screamed with a cold and cruel pain.

The shadow of Shen Zhixian seemed to be everywhere. Yan Jin panted, his figure flashing and his sword quick like a demon, as he slashed at every single phantom like a madman.

With every move of the sword, the blade trembled, sounding like a black crow screaming on a moonless night. The sword cut through the dead leaves, scattering them up in a desolate cloud all around him.

But these phantoms were endless, continuously separating and reappearing before him.

In the end, Yan Jin was only just a sixteen-year-old boy. He had long-term malnutrition and a thin body. He’d also been seriously injured. His body could not withstand such domineering sword moves and soon became exhausted. But he could not stop.

There was a voice echoing in his mind, tempting and dragging what little reason he had left toward the dark abyss.

“Kill him...Kill everything...No one could deceive you or stop you…”

Blood surged frantically in his body, and his spiritual power condensed in his spirit root. But it was too fierce. His still fragile spirit root could not bear the pressure and soon displayed faint marks of fragmentation.

Zzng!

Just as Yan Jin was on the brink of collapse, another sword flew out of its sheath, brilliant like the pale moon emerging from behind dark clouds. The thin sword gently but powerfully broke through the chaos and firmly intercepted Yan Jin’s sword.

“A’jin!”

The soft and flexible sword intentionally and easily resolved the ruthless and savage sword move. Distantly, Yan Jin heard anxious shouting, and he instinctively turned toward it, the red in his eyes dispersing a little.

“Wake up! A’jin, wake up!”

The call came again.

Yan Jin had never heard anyone call his name in such an anxious and concerned voice, as if he was a treasure and if he was harmed, someone would hurt and worry.

He’d always heard derisive taunts and slanderous gossip, followed by sharp laughter heavy with invisible spikes.

At first, he was unprepared and was easily bloodied. But, later, he learned to build a high wall of indifference, shutting himself inside in order to prevent further injuries.

Yan Jin stood awkwardly, his eyes dazed and unfocused. Shen Zhixian couldn't tell whether he was looking at him or if he was just was looking in his general direction. After hesitating for a moment, he tentatively called, “A’jin?”

With this final call, the weird redness in Yan Jin’s eyes gradually receded and the sword in his hand fell to the ground. Brows furrowing, he suddenly spit out a mouthful of blood. Then, his feet softened, and his body fell forward.

Shen Zhixian was shocked. He could only throw his sword to the ground and hurriedly took a step forward to catch the exhausted youth into his arms. Patting his back, he tried to comfort him, “It’s all right, it’s all right…”

Yan Jin lay motionless in his arms, looking as if he was unconscious. But Shen Zhixian knew he wasn’t unconscious and that he was gradually recovering.

Because that familiar, extreme guardedness had returned.

Shen Zhixian released the person before he could reach out and push him away. After standing, he leaned down to pick up Yan Jin’s sword.

This was just an ordinary sword, the kind that ordinary disciples usually carry. Yan Jin was clearly not valued. Even as a personal disciple, he didn’t even get a decent sword.

Shen Zhixian sighed. Just now, when his sword had resisted Yan Jin’s fierce flow, Yan Jin’s sword had broken into pieces and fallen to the ground.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He coughed casually, trying to move the topic. "What was the sword technique you just used?"

The sword technique was extraordinarily fierce and obviously did not belong to Qingyun Sect. Ordinary sword wouldn’t be able to withstand the fierceness. It made him wonder where Yan Jin had learned it from.

However, Yan Jin didn’t care about this problem. He hadn’t completely recovered from the emotions that had flooded him earlier.

Everything that happened just now was unexpected and strange. He seemed to be in control but there were unfamiliar emotions surging in his heart. His swordplay also was involuntary, as if forcibly guided.

That mysterious, hoarse voice...

Kill whom? Who was that voice telling him to kill?

Kill Shen Zhixian? Or anyone who insulted him?

Yan Jin thought about the voice again and again, and the more he thought, the more the chaos in his mind churned. From his heart came the pervading sense of despair, as if his soul was desperately screaming deep inside.

No!

You can’t kill him!

Don’t!

The despair was crushing,and every single words seemed to be entrenched in blood.

Yan Jin was suddenly agitated. His hands fiercely fisted, fingertips firmly digging into his palm. The little bit of pain brought awareness, and he finally heard Shen Zhixian’s question. But he only shook his head, his face still pale, and said nothing.

Seeing that he was reluctant to answer, Shen Zhixian no longer pursued the matter. Maybe it was something that Yan Jin had inadvertently created himself. After all, he was the protagonist. Even if he managed to cut a mountain in half, it wouldn't be such surprise.

Shen Zhixian sighed, threw the sword hilt away, and turned back to recover his frost sword. “Those swords are not good to use. I’ll find a good one for you in the future.”

As he was thinking about this, he silently turned away and didn’t see the hint of bewilderment and vulnerability that flashed across Yan Jin’s eyes.

Xixi: Phew! That was a long chapter.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 12

With the truth about the Hidden Sword Pavilion temporarily out of grasp, the days gradually returned to peace.

On the surface, the master and disciple seemed to be in perfect harmony, but Shen Zhixian knew that the little hedgehog was just hiding his thorns and waiting for the perfect opportunity to poke him.

As they waited for Yan Jin to return from his morning classes, Shen Zhixian and Xiao Caoya lounged in bed together. With a sigh, Shen Zhixian lazily rolled over.

Xiao Caoya, who failed to understand why Yan Jin had to go to classes, also heaved a sigh that echoed Shen Zhixian's.

Shen Zhixian played with it’s tiny leaves as he murmured, “A’jin is so hard to coax…”

Xiao Caoya understood his sentiment and immediately shook its leaves in agreement. Super hard to coax. It’d been behaving so coquettishly, all in exchange for the rare opportunity to cling on to Yan Jin’s sleeves.

One person and one grass bud looked at each other for a long time, and then they sighed again.

Xiao Caoya spread out on the bed for a moment, then went out to bask in the sun. Shen Zhixian sat up, hugging the bed cover to his chest, and couldn’t help recalling the situation that day.

He clearly saw that Yan Jin’s eyes were red, though it did shortly returned to normal

That cold and beautiful color felt exactly the same as his swordplay, ruthless and indifferent.

At that time, Shen Zhixian was too worried and didn’t think much about it. Later, once he calmed down, he remembered that, in the book, Yan Jin's eyes would always turned red whenever he became a devil.

In the book, because Yan Jin's spirit root was severed and he could no longer cultivate into an immortal, he sought out a different path and became a devil. But, now that his spirit root was safe, why were there suddenly signs of the devil in him?

Shen Zhixian was deeply apprehensive, worried that the little hedgehog would perform a show for him by single-handedly killing him, the master.

After a while, he stood up suddenly and grabbed his sword to practice.

He’d recently turned the original owner’s storage space inside out and found a sword manual that the original owner himself had written. As a result, he’d been practicing hard at improving his swordsmanship.

Since he bore the name of a master, he must be proficient enough to be able to teach. Just in case...Yan Jin might see his dedication and decide to forgive him.

The more he practiced, the more he realized how innately talented the original owner was. It was no wonder that the former sect leader would value him so much, and why he was named the best sword cultivator in the sect. Long before his constitution had weakened, he was able to create a rare and insightful set of sword manuals.

Every time Shen Zhixian practiced his swordplay, he felt completely integrated with the sword. It was probably the body’s muscle memory at

play.

After completing a set of sword moves, Shen Zhixian stood at the edge of a cliff. He let out a sigh, and the gloominess at the bottom of his heart dissipated, leaving behind only a sense of comfort and satisfaction. It even made him want to take in his fill of the world, to carry his sword and travel the distant landscapes.

The original owner must have been a spirited young man. Unfortunately, after he received his heart injury, all his dreams turned into dust.

The wind was strong near the cliff, blowing the skirt of his robe all about him. Shen Zhixian stood for a while, long enough for his hot blood to cool. At last, he glanced down at the bottomless cliff, took a step back, and turned to go back to the house. He stopped short when he saw Yan Jin. He hadn't noticed when Yan Jin had returned or how long he'd been standing there watching him.

"A'jin is back," Shen Zhixin greeted. Noticing that he was carrying a sword, he added casually, "Is the sword suitable?"

Since Yan Jin's previous ordinary sword had shattered into several pieces, resulting in him being unable to cultivate, Shen Zhixian had deliberately given him the sword he was now currently using.

Yan Jin lowered his lashes, hiding the flash of suspicion within. He bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Master, for gifting this sword to me. It's very good."

When Shen Zhixian realized that Yan Jin's behavior had no hint of vigilance or defensiveness, he nearly broke into a wide smile. After muttering resolutely to himself, he lifted his chin and straightforwardly said, "Practice two moves for me to see."

Shen Zhixian seemed to be in an exceptionally good mood. His current smiling features were a break from his usually calm and simple elegance. His swordplay had been unconstrained and easy yet overpowering, like a

legendary immortal hero of the jianghu.

Yan Jin felt as if he was seeing him clearly for the first time. For a second, he even felt that this man in front of him was not Shen Zhixian. How could such a cold and dark man have such a free and easy swordplay?.

But this was clearly Shen Zhixian. Although his hatred for Shen Zhixian had not disappeared, he could not deny that Shen Zhixian's features were beautiful and completely unforgettable. No one could imitate that tear-shaped birthmark.

After practicing for two hours, Shen Zhixian was loath to put his sword away. However, he couldn't use his spiritual force for long periods of time. No matter how much he wanted to fight on, his heart injury would eventually come out to punish him.

"It's actually very good," he praised. Seeing that Yan Jin was about to put away his sword, he quickly stopped him. "There's no hurry. Right now, you only know a few moves. I can teach you more…"

The original owner had never bothered to guide Yan Jin in his practice. As a result, Yan Jin could only go to class with ordinary disciples. However, those disciples had unanimously plotted to secretly isolate and oppress him, even deliberately giving him the worst sword to make him fail his classes.

Because of his frequent absences, Yan Jin was only able to gain rudimentary knowledge. Fortunately, the protagonist's halo was too outstanding. Even with the most common sword, he still managed to gain some decent skills.

But, it was only decent. There were still a lot of mistakes, which Shen Zhixian took out one by one to correct for him.

After speaking for some time, Shen Zhixian forgot the estrangement between master and disciple. He took Yan Jin's sword and personally showed him a set of moves.

“For example, the ephemeral dew technique should not be used in this way. Think of it as the swordsman stepping out in the early morning to see the mayfly soaring past in a single motion. All that is ephemeral is always fleeting. As a result, the sword techniques must be smart and fast, just like the passing mayfly...”

He lifted the sword and swung it down, the blade emitting a sharp sound as the sword cut through the air.

Yan Jin was stunned. He took a step forward and stared closely at the blade.

“The wind blows gracefully pass the swordsman and the darkening sky brought enlightenment. As dusk arrives, the dead leaves reflects the dying sun and the west wind rolls bleakly past. Meeting a rival, feeling doubtful and irresolute, only to find that death is still so distant.”

A vague figure flickered in Yan Jin’s mind, coalescing into the fuzzy image of a high-spirited man dressed in white, demonstrating his sword techniques while saying something similar. But, at that time, he was holding a dead branch instead of a sword.

Yan Jin blurted out, “Master, can you really imitate the wind in a single stroke?”

“Imitate the wind in one stroke?” Shen Zhixian’s sword tip snapped up, and almost without thinking, he flicked his wrist to perform the move. He immediately said without thinking, “Now, the full moon hangs in the dark twilight, and the west wind sweeps up…”

Yan Jin’s pupils suddenly dilated. The figure in his memory and the person in front of him seemed to overlap into a single individual. A name that had been firmly etched in his mind rose up, and he blurted, “Sui--”

“Aiya!” Shen Zhixian suddenly exclaimed, interrupting Yan Jin’s words. His face slightly shifted, and not bothering to finish the move, he planted the sword into the ground with one hand and used to other to hold his waist. His expression was subtle and helpless. “My waist…”

Throughout the entire demonstration, Shen Zhixian dared not use his spiritual power, only relying on Yan Jin’s sword. However, Yan Jin’s sword was high quality and the weight was somewhat hefty. As it was, the ephemeral dew was still trying to overcome the rising wind, which required opening out his stance. At this important juncture, he didn’t pay enough attention and ended up slightly spraining his waist.

Yan Jin: "..."

He swallowed the name that he was about to blurt out back into his stomach, and then instantly returned to his customary state of silence. At the direction of Shen Zhixian, he carefully and steadily helped him back to the house.

To lend Shen Zhixian some strength, Yan Jin allowed him to placed his hand on his wrist. He realized at once that the master’s touch was ice-cold, not the temperature that a healthy man should have. His heart injury had buried his future, leaving him weak and frail. The body had become a waste.

In his past life, Yan Jin also admired Shen Zhixian so he was not resistant to paying respect to him. But, who would have thought that this respect would be paid back with his spirit root severed, resulting in his death.

He pitied Shen Zhixian, but he hated him even more.

Yan Jin lowered his lids, masking the complex emotions at the bottom of his eyes, as he helped the person on to the bed, bowed silently, and retreated just as quietly.

Xixi: That sword talk (poetry?) was so hard to translate. I probably completely butchered it and will apologize in advance.

Also, completely feel free to speculate in the comment section; I love reading them. If, however, you really really really want spoilers, this novel has a . XD

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 13

Since the sword training fiasco, Shen Zhixian felt as if he'd completely broken the pot and damaged his image in front of Yan Jin. Ever since then, he was too lazy to rebuild it.

Anyway, now that such an embarrassing thing had already been seen by Yan Jin, what good would it do to continue the act?

Pretending was also tiring. Shen Zhixian rolled up the bed cover as he calmly thought it over. In the end, he could only rely on his inner beauty to become a good teacher and gain his disciple's recognition.

Therefore, soon after the waist straining incident, Yan Jin would often bump into Shen Zhixian in different kinds of scenes. Shen Zhixian eating a fish and choking on a fishbone. Shen Zhixian lazing around in bed and then starting fights with Xiao Caoya. Shen Zhixian practicing his swordplay, only to become absentminded and dropped his sword, nearly chopping Xiao Caoya bald. Soon after, one human and one grass bud would once again started squabbling irritably on the spot. And so on and so forth.

Yan Jin: "..."

Yan Jin's mood was very complicated.

Was this really the Shen Zhixian he knew? Maybe he really was possessed...

Meanwhile, Shen Zhixian was surprised to find that the result of loosing his image was immersing rewarding. He would have never thought that after

trying so hard, he was not able to soften the person even half a point. But, because of his pile of mischief, the same person's mindset finally became shaken.

Although he wouldn't be able to clear up the previous misunderstanding, at least the attitude toward him became more placid. The master and disciple could even casually chat now and then.

Shen Zhixian was very pleased, hardly able to believe that this policy of appeasement would actually work. He'd even squandered so much money and didn't even come close to this result. Anyway, years ago, the former sect leader had given him jurisdiction over a set of lands that was very large and very wealthy. More so than Song Ming.

Song Ming must be furious.

Because, in today's morning meeting, Song Ming even took the initiative to secretly signal for the stewards to hint that Shen Zhixian give up supervision of these lands and hand the entirety of the commission to the sect.

All the elders knew how much revenue had already been intercepted halfway for the sect.

Shen Zhixian calmly listened, and then his brows furrowed and he clasped one hand to his weak heart, his eyelashes trembling. Quickly after, he sighed and began to talk about missing his master, the former sect leader.

Since transmigrating, in addition to working hard on Yan Jin, he also spent a lot of time on establishing good relationships with several elders. After all, it's difficult to walk alone. Better to hold a few thighs to live!

Except for him, who became the fifth elder, the other four elders were the former sect leader's fellow disciples. They were all Shen Zhixian's senior martial uncles. While the first two elders adhere more strictly to their duties, Shen Zhixian's relationships with the rest were quite good.

So, every time, Zhen Zhixian clutched at his chest, the third and fourth elders would immediately come together to harmonize and set up a stage to perform.

With “Aiya, you can’t have an accident”, with “If you have an accident, how can we face Old Wen later?”, or “Maintaining your body’s health is very important for cultivation. Is your peak’s spirit stones not enough? Uncle Shi will give you some…”

After one round of harmonizing, the Fourth Elder seriously said to the stewards, “Your Elder Shen has a special physical condition and needs a lot of spirit stones to support it. I noticed that the sect has a large number of spirit stones in storage and so you must find ways to help him. You can never be harsh with Old Wen’s only personal disciple.”

The Fourth Elder’s “harsh” words were said in such a righteous manner that people dare not be brave enough to contradict. Besides, they didn’t want to hound the former sect leader’s only disciple to death!

So, they could only seal their mouths and set the matter aside. Shen Zhixian won a great victory. He was incredibly happy to be weak. Anyway, his mental quality was still quite good. Who cared if others made up superficial gossip about him? He still preferred to watch Song Ming suffer a setback.

The two elders, along with the “weak and sickly” Elder Shen, promptly asked to withdraw, and they all slipped away together.

They left behind Song Min, who was brimming with raging anger that he'd had to hide. His face turned white and blue for a long time before he could expel the anger enough to continue the discussions.

Having left early, the trio lazily parted ways at the intersection.

The two elders went to play chess, while Shen Zhixian calmly returned to make up for his lost sleep. Waking up so early in the morning, combined with the chill of winter, was enough to make him drowsy and sleepy.

However, he was destined not to sleep well that day.

“Chirp, chirp, chirp! Chirp, chirp!

“Ai!”

Half asleep and half awake, Shen Zhixian groaned as Xiao Caoya swatted painfully at his face. He patted his surrounding, found the bed cover, and pulled it up to cover his face, mumbling, “Caoya, how many times have I told you! Don’t be noisy when I’m sleeping!”

“Chirp!”

Xiao Caoya slyly avoided his hand, jumped up to his ear, and began to yell even as it tugged fiercely at Shen Zhixian’s hair.

Shen Zhixian was indifferent.

When Xiao Caiya couldn’t get the response it wanted, it clutched at the edge of the bed cover, violently yanked it down, and easily tore the seventh bedcover of the month into shreds.

No one would have guessed that such a small grass bud who looked fragile enough to be carried away by the wind would be so fierce.

The young disciples in the General Affairs Division could only make subtle guesses as to why Elder Shen went through seven bedcovers in a month.

After shredding the bedcover, Xiao Caoya hurriedly flew go the window and used its small blade-like hand to gently tap the window.

With a click, the window opened, allowing the cold wind free entry into the room. Fine snow began drifting inside. It was not good to live up high; the wind was too strong and the snow too cold.

Cultivators were naturally not afraid of extreme heat or cold. As a result, an

interior heater was not provided. With his bedcover ripped into shreds, Shen Zhixian was exposed to the cold wind. He instantly sobered. “Caoya!”

“Chirp!”

Before Shen Zhixian could get angry, Xiao Caiya waved around his grassy arm like it was a sword and then made a waiting posture.

Shen Zhixian froze. “A’jin’s waiting outside?”

“Chirp!” Xiao Caoya nodded.

“How long has he been waiting?”

“Chirp!” A long time!

Shen Zhixian quickly got up and draped a robe over his shoulder. After smoothing down his hair, he rushed out the door.

Yan Jin silently stood outside, his figure completely motionless. Even though he was sheltered by the eaves, the wind continued to shower him with scattered snow. His shoulders were piled with a layer of snow, indicating that he’d been waiting outside for a long time.

In just three short years, he’d outgrown the lean and malnourished boy of that year. Shen Zhixian had always made sure to supply him with delicious food and drinks, as well as elixirs that could help him improve his cultivation. As a result, he grew quickly, stretching his bones and adding meat. His body filled out, becoming long and well-proportioned.

He’d become a handsome young man.

Shen Zhuxian took a good look, and then sighed. His young disciple finally grew up. If it weren’t for Yan Jin’s ineffable indifference, he would probably be even more popular than Yan Shen.

But, that was not the point. The point was, how did Yan Jin grow up to be as tall as him?!

Last month, Yan Jin went into retreat and so Shen Zhixian hadn’t seen him in a while. At a glance, he found that the youth who was so thin had become so tall!

Shen Zhixian was very distressed as he thought, *Aiya, this is the moment the disciple became stronger than the master!*

Yan Jin could still grow older too!

And he...Shen Zhixian’s expression immediately sank when he recalled that, in the book, the original Shen Zhixian had been one round bigger than Yan Jin.

The handsome and steady young man knew nothing about the complex emotions warring inside his master as he respectfully saluted, greeting, “Master.”

| | Last Chapter

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 14.1

It was too cold and snowy outside so Shen Zhixian turned slightly sideways to point inside the rooms. “Let's go inside?”

Yan Jin shook his head and said, “Disciple just wanted to ask Master something. Teacher Shao from the third peak wants to hold a small sword comprehension exchange, and he invited this disciple to go to the third peak to participate…”

“A small sword comprehension exchange?” Shen Zhixian muttered to himself. This was a small meeting wherein the disciples under the elders of the main peaks gathered together to discuss swords techniques and exchange sword experience. This practice of exchanging and learning from each other could improve progress and comprehension.

In the past few years, Shen Zhixian had watched the youth grow up little by little, and he realized that the young man was becoming more reticent day by day. He was very annoyed, afraid that he was raising a person perfect for blackening. At present, it was already very rare for Yan Jin to even want to participate in these group activities. Therefore, he readily agreed to allow Yan Jin to participate.

“Will Yan Shen also be present?”

Yan Jin nodded.

Shen Zhixian urged, "Stay away from him."

In the past years, he’d deliberately given Yan Shen the cold shoulder.

However, Yan Shen was still unscrupulous in his heart and continued to backhandedly encourage and brainwash people into giving Yan Jin a hard time. Despite Shen Zhixian’s overt and covert warnings, these incidents had not dissipated but had instead intensified.

Sooner or later, he would find evidence that would allow him to directly punish Yan Shen.

Yan Jin murmured an assent.

Shen Zhixian knew his character well and knew that he was a man of few words. As a result, he merely waved his hand to allow Yan Jin to leave.

As Yan Jin was about to leave, Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered something. “I’ve asked Third Elder to set up an array for me. On your way back, you can bring him with you."

Third Elder was an expert in array formations. Recently, Shen Zhixian had begged him to set up a warmth array to help with the cold chill of heavy winter. Even if he wasn’t afraid of the cold, he still didn’t like breathing in the cold air when he sleeps!

After Yan Jin left, Shen Zhixian found that his sleepiness had disappeared. After pondering for a moment, he briskly walked toward the back of the mountain, saying to himself, “Might as well take the little grass bud and go soak in the hot springs. I’ll bring a plate of fruit and a jug of wine.”

The former sect leader was truly very good to the original Shen Zhixian. Not only did his peak have the most aura, the terrain was easy to defend and difficult to attack. There was also a hot spring in the back mountain. The hot spring was full of aura, such that one could feel it on approach.

Shen Zhixian fell in love with this hot spring as soon as he discovered it and would often come to soak in it every few days.

The jade pot grew warm as it floated along the surface of the hot spring,

and the jade plate was ladened with various fruits cut into small pieces. The sweet fruity aroma and the scent of clear wine blended together, creating a pleasant, decadent fragrance.

Xiao Caoya plunged into the bottom of the spring before surfacing and shaking its small leaves, scattering water drops on Shen Zhixian's face.

Shen Zhixian poured a handful of water over it and drowned it all over again.

It took awhile for them to stop playing around. Finally, Xiao Caoya lazily spread itself on the shore, basking in the sun. Shen Zhixian leaned against the water's edge as he sat on a stone ledge with his eyes closed, thinking.

In the blink of an eye, three years had already passed and the plot was changing every day.

In the book, as early as three years ago, Yan Jin's spirit root was severed by the original Shen Zhixian and expelled from Qingyun Sect. It didn't take long for him to become a devil cultivator. Once he got strong, he returned to kill everyone who had hurt him in the past.

His former master received the worst death.

However, since Shen Zhixian's transmigration, he'd taken pains to change the plot. At this moment, Yan Jin was still alive and well, and he'd been raised delicately and tenderly. He'd also not been expelled. Thinking about this, Shen Zhixian naturally felt a sense of achievement.

He just wasn't sure when this little hedgehog will completely put down his grudge.

Shen Zhixian raised his hand up to massage his eyebrows as he mulled over another matter.

For some reason, he just couldn't fully integrate the original Shen Zhixian's memory. Usually, he could access normal information without much

trouble. But, whenever he carefully wanted to investigate certain things, he found that there would be huge gaps in the memory.

One of these gaps was the death of the former sect leader.

He'd always felt that the death of the former sect leader was not as simple as it appeared on the surface. Everything was normal before his retreat, and a promotion was a sure thing.

But, he suddenly died.

Before the former sect leader stepped down...or rather, before the former sect leader's death, Song Ming was the last person to see him.

Song Ming was the only one who knew what had happened in the short quarter hour after their meeting.

Shen Zhixian took a deep breath, rubbed his eyebrows again, and had an epiphany—Wait! The sword spirit!

His frost sword spirit had been sleeping for many years so he hadn't considered this option. A superior sword who'd been with a master for a long time would give birth to the sword spirit, which would assist with cultivation and remain forever at its master's side.

The former sect leader's sword had a sword spirit, which had been with him for hundreds of years. As long as Shen Zhixian find the former sect leader's sword and allow the sword spirit to replay the scene of his death, he would finally discover the truth.

As soon as Shen Zhixian smiled, he immediately froze. Wait. He remembered now that he'd personally destroyed the former sect leader's sword when he cultivated incorrectly and had a qi deviation.

The sword was gone so the sword spirit would naturally have also dissipated.

Shen Zhixian’s mind turned at great speed. In addition to the former sect leader’s sword, there was still Song Ming’s sword spirit.

A sword spirit will only reproduce the true past events and would not lie!

He took a deep breath. After so many years of cultivating and practicing, Yan Jin had gradually became stronger and now had a better chance of protecting himself. Now, Shen Zhixian had more time to ponder these mysteries around him.

After taking a last drink and putting the pot on the shore, Shen Zhixian moved to stand up but suddenly felt a familiar dizziness swept over him. In these years, the dizziness that appeared many times and became the known precursor to a heart attack.

But, it’d never been this serious!

The heart pounded as if it would jump right out of Shen Zhixian’s chest. It felt too intense and a burst of pain detonated, turning the rapid heartbeat into a full-fledged heart attack!

Shen Zhixian’s face turned pale, his vision darkening so much that he could hardly see. He wanted to climb ashore, but the water’s resistance was too high and his hands and feet were too weak. He swept the jug of wine on the water’s edge into the spring, but it was not use.

Gritting his teeth against his own convulsions, Shen Zhixian tried to climb out of the hot spring, breathing heavily, his pain so intense that it was almost choking him.

Xiao Caoya noticed that something wasn't right and anxiously came over to investigate.

But, Shen Zhixian hadn’t the time to mind him. His consciousness gradually slipped into a state of drowsiness. Immediately, he lost his stability and his body slipped into the water. He barely had time to struggle

before passing out.

Xiao Caoya was startled and quickly jumped into the water, wanting to fish him out.

However, the water’s resistance was still too strong and the grass bud was still too small. After several attempts, it couldn’t do anything to help. It could only make two short chirps before it broke the water’s surface and hurriedly flew toward the third peak.

Xixi: This chapter was a long one and for my peace of mind (and my tired eyes) , I've decided to split it into two parts.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 14.2

At the third peak, the disciples gathered together in a familiar way as they sat down casually and greeted each other.

Arguments arose from time to time, and some disciples even drew swords on the spot to discuss with others and to verify truth from falsehood.

"Senior Brother Yan."

The two people facing each other within the open space attracted everyone’s attention. Yan Shen, whom Shen Zhixian had told Yan Jin to stay away from, took the initiative to quietly come stand in front of him and casually said, “I haven’t congratulated Senior Brother yet on your retreat. I didn’t know…”

Yan Jin glanced at him indifferently. There was no emotion in that glance, making Yan Shen felt quite peeved.

But, he quickly returned to his senses and, acting as if he couldn’t feel Yan Jin’s indifference, said in a kind voice, “How has Master been lately? Master hasn’t called for me in a long time.”

Although Shen Zhixian didn’t sever his relationship with Yan Shen, he was very estranged from him. He would avoid his greetings, hardly summoned him, and would only occasionally nodded to him.

Yan Shen wasn’t even as good as those two young disciples who ran up and down the mountains all day.

In the past, the Supreme Master valued him the most. How did things change so suddenly? It must be that Yan Jin said something about him that should not be said, which made Master angry.

Yan Shen plastered a smile on his face to hide his gritted teeth and thought about the many times he'd had to respectfully greet Yan Jin. In these three years, he'd tried to create stumbling blocks for Yan Jin but failed every time. Instead, he'd lost the respect of his master, and his status only slid lower and lower among the many disciples.

This huge drop in status and respect turned his character even more distorted.

As a child, Yan Jin had suffered many hardships, and so he was very sensitive to Yan Shen's superficial shell of goodwill that hid his malicious intent. Instead of engaging, he merely looked down at his sword with an expressionless face and turned a deaf ear to Yan Shen's words.

When Yan Shen couldn't get a response, he gritted his teeth, tightly grasped his sword, strode to the empty space everyone had deliberately vacated, and cupped his hands toward Yan Jin."Senior Brother, please enlighten me."

Yan Jin looked at him indifferently and remained seated, not saying a single word.

During the stalemate, the discussion around them gradually faded, and the atmosphere turned awkward. The smile on Yan Shen's face was somewhat forced, and his voice sounded aggrieved when he said, "Does Senior Brother look down on me and that is why he won't exchange pointers with me?"

To be honest, yes.

Yan Jin already had a gifted spirit root. In the past years, Shen Zhixian had been feeding him well and elevating him with top-notch cultivation

techniques. As a result, his spirit root was tempered to the extreme. Not only that, he was also able to learn Shen Zhixian's improved sword techniques. These factors, combined with his protagonist halo, had resulted in him far surpassing the other disciples in swordplay.

There were even rumors within the sect that Yan Jin would become the second Shen Zhixian, who was the best sword cultivator of his time. This, of course, referred to the young Shen Zhixian, before he had his heart injury and became a veritable waste.

People could only sigh with envy.

Senior Brother Shao looked on as Yan Jin silently stood and entered the encirclement with his sword. As he drank a cup of tea, he pressed down a little sigh from the bottom of his heart and began to watch the battle.

Without a doubt, Yan Shen would never be able to defeat Yan Jin. Although Yan Shen cultivated well in the early stages, his growth eventually rapidly declined due to his unstable mind. He would often come to Third Peak to request a lot of elixirs to aide his floundering cultivation.

Yan Shen drew his sword, the motion at once urgent and hurried and ruthless. This was not learning; this was more like fighting. Though, clearly, it was just a joke in Yan Jin's eyes.

However, Yan Jin did not deliberately play with him, nor did he ruthlessly oppress him. He was always very low-key.

Yan Jin's attack had more offensive moves than defensive. His methodical sword moves forced Yan Shen to retreat again and again. Until, at last, Yan Shen began to cut a sorry figure. Finally, he made the one sword move that he'd taken pains to memorize by heart.

Dark Clouds Covering the Moon.

Yan Shen's sword qi swirled as his spiritual force blended into it, turning the energy into a thick cloud of fog that quickly enveloped the two men. This

move was not very lethal. Its main purpose was to obstruct Yan Jin’s sight so that he won’t be able to see Yan Shen’s next move.

Yan Jin didn’t want to bother with him anymore. His blade emitted a clear, ringing sound as his sword ray broke through the fog. Just as he was about to end this boring fight, the corner of his eyes suddenly caught a flash of green.

Shen Zhixian's little grass bud?

How could this little guy be here?

Xiao Caoya had always been very low-key, probably because Shen Zhixian had repeatedly warned it to never allow other people to see it. Why would it suddenly appear here now?

Because he was slightly distracted, Yan Jin didn’t notice that, hidden within the fog, Yan Shen’s arm had gently trembled. Immediately, a thin strand of black qi snaked down to the tip of his sword and flew onto Yan Jin’s body.

The distraction lasted only for a brief moment, but it was enough. After Yan Jin returned his attention back to the matter at hand, his sword ray completely scattered the fog and connected at once with Yan Shen’s sword. An ice-cold spiritual force burst out, turning Yan Shen’s wrist numb. His sword fell out of his hand, the tip lodged diagonally into the ground.

Immediately, loud voices rose all around them. The moves Yan Jin had displayed was originally created by Shen Zhixian and were rarely seen by these junior disciples. The moment the battle ended, they scattered into pairs to discuss the moves they’d just witnessed.

Yan Shen’s face was pale, his expression displaying a moment of viciousness at he looked at Yan Jin. Then, his concealed his expression and said, “Thank you, Senior Brother Yan, for your guidance.”

Yan Jin merely looked at him silently, nodded indifferently, and returned to his seat.

After the sword comprehension exchange came to an end, Yan Jin turned his gaze toward Xiao Caoya, who looked to be in a hurry and was frantically waving its grass blades at him. His eyebrows furrowed slightly, and he had no choice but to approach Senior Brother Shao to announce his intention to leave first.

Yan Jin's quietness and his preference for solitude was famous among the disciples. Senior Brother Shao did not force him, but merely waved his hands and pulled out two small sachets. As he handed them over, he said, "This array was requested by Elder Shen. Please take these to him."

Yan Jin cupped his hands, thanked Senior Brother Shao, and quietly left.

He deliberately walked the path that lead toward Xiao Caoya's hidden spot. As expected, the little grass bud immediately rushed over, seeming particularly anxious, and pointed a grass blade in the direction of Shen Zhixian's peak.

Although Yan Jin couldn't understand its language, he'd spent four years with the little grass bud after all. He could still understand what this meant. Probably, something had happened to Shen Zhixian.

He followed after Xiao Caoya and hurried all the way behind the mountain, where the hot spring was located.

The water surface had faint steam rising from it, and it looked calm and peaceful. There were no movements to be seen anywhere. Yan Jin was confused so he said in a low voice, "What's wrong?"

Xiao Caoya loosened its grip on Yan Jin's sleeve and jumped into the water. It stretched out a small leaf, waving for him to follow, before disappearing underneath the water's surface.

Yan Jin hesitated for a moment. Finally, he employed a water avoidance spell and slowly walked into the water.

Yan Jin naturally knew about this hot spring. After all, Shen Zhixian liked it so much.

In fact, Shen Zhixian had once even asked him if he wanted to soak in it, saying that doing so would soothe his veins. He'd refused out of precaution.

However, he hadn't expected that the first time they found themselves in the same pool together would be because of such a situation.

The bottom of the hot spring was peaceful, and a person dressed in white laid there with his eyes closed, as if he was merely slumbering. His long, black hair were scattered under his slender body. His face was pale and bloodless, making the little tear-shaped birthmark at the corner of his eye looked particularly red. The whole person looked like a fragile, white jade carving, exuding a delicate and enchanting beauty.

Due to a cultivator's instinct, a faint barrier had immediately enclosed around him, blocking the warm water from rushing over his body. But, because he was unconscious for so long, the barrier was too weak to touch.

Xiao Caoya carefully stretched out a small leaf and poked the bubble-like barrier, which silently shattered at once.

The water rushed over in an instant, pouring into Shen Zhixian's ears and nose. Even though he was unconscious, he probably still felt an unknown pressure assailing his throat and he subconsciously tilted his head slightly, as if trying to dislodge it.

But, he was at the bottom of the hot spring and there was water in all directions. He could not avoid it.

"Chirp!" Xiao Caoya was in a panic. It turned back, anxious urging Yan Jin to save the person.

The bottom of the hot spring was not dark. Yan Jin half-knelt beside Shen Zhixian, gazing at him with a deep, motionless stare. After a long while, he slowly raised his hand.

And, placed it on Shen Zhixian’s fragile and unguarded neck.

The author has something to say:
The master was choked to death again. The End! Sprinkle flowers!

Xixi: Lol @ the author.
But, seriously, who wears clothes to bathe, I ask you?! (╯°□°）╯ ┻━┻

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 15

Shen Zhixian felt as if he was floating in a dark sea.

The water pressed down on him, making him breathed hard. His chest felt hollowed out, as if a hole had been cut into it, turning every struggle for breath into agony.

Just bear it one more time. Shen Zhixian thought hauntingly that, very soon, he would be stewed in water and die.

In the chaos, he felt something tugging at his sleeves, and he subconsciously touched it with the back of his hand. The little hands that were pulling tightly at his sleeve were cold to the touch.

Who was it…?

The pain eased a bit, allowing him to finally focus enough to follow the little hands. It led to a thin body that probably belonged to a seven or eight year old child.

The child’s wrists were as thin as a twigs. Shen Zhixian held them gently, noticing how weak the pulse was, as if it might suddenly stop at any moment.

His body was still sinking, and the cold sea seemed to compress around him. Shen Zhixian endured the pain and tried to hug the boy, hoping to take him up to the surface. Just then, a gleam of light penetrated the dark sea water and fell on the child’s face.

Shen Zhixian looked down at the person he was holding.

Jan Yin?!!

This face clearly belonged to Yan Jin. No, maybe this was Yan Jin when he was a child?

He was so surprised that he forgot to move. Suddenly, the child opened his eyes and a pair of red pupils coldly gazed at him. The hands that had originally been tugging at his sleeves now silently rose up to his throat.

“Master…” The cold voice that rang in his ears was as indifferent as the child’s appearance. “This is in return for the spirit root you gave me.”

Shen Zhixian was stunned. His lips trembled and he wanted to speak but the hands were squeezing hard, choking off his words.

That nightmare scene that he’d nearly forgotten slammed back into his consciousness. Shen Zhixian’s throat was tightly squeezed and the pain in his chest intensified with his suffocation, turning his vision dark.

“No...no…” He gasped intermittently, struggling to spit out the broken words. “No...I...Ah!”

With a bang, Shen Zhixian burst out of the water while being enclosed in a warm embrace. The pressure around him immediately fell away, and his throat no longer felt choked. Grabbing on to the person holding him with one hand, he tilted his head sideways and vomited out blood-tinged water.

There was a thin mist in front of him. He gasped, the look in his eyes frantic even as his body shivered uncontrollably. He fruitlessly repeated, “It wasn’t me...I didn’t…”

The man in Yan Jin’s arms looked pitiful and very fragile.

Shen Zhixian’s frame was naturally thin, with the metabolism of one who

would not get fat no matter how much he eats. Meanwhile, the thin bamboo pole of the past had grown up into a strong and sturdy young man.

As Shen Zhixian slumped against him, Yan Jin realized that his waist was so thin that he could wrap one hand around it.

Shen Zhixian was obviously not fully awake yet. His head leaned weakly on Yan Jin's shoulder, his face so pale that Yan Jin could even see the thin blue veins under the fine and thin skin. Shen Zhixian pulled at Yan Jin's collar with one hand, even as he mumbled incoherently.

His inner clothes were soaked with water, and the wet fabric clung to him. As a result of the struggle, his clothes had become messy, the collar slipping open enough to reveal delicate, jade-like collar bones.

Yan Jin's lowered his eyes took down at the man in his arms, his gaze unfathomable.

Xiao Caoya stood to one side, watching as Yan Jin looked at the person in his arms before turning his turning his head to look at the grass bud with indifference. That glance was ice-cold and, within the depths of his pupils, gleamed a touch of red.

Xiao Caoya was stunned by that look and immediately fell down to pretend to be death.

Yan Jin indifferently held the person in his arms, ignore the grass bud, and strode away.

Even when they got back to the house, Shen Zhixian was still unconscious. His heart attack was worse than ever, and he'd finally fell asleep half-way home.

Chilled by the cold wind, Yan Jin's pupils had already returned to normal and the cold, ruthless aura on his body had disappeared. He silently applied a few cleansing techniques on Shen Zhixian, dried and straightened his clothes, covered him with a thick bedcover, and stared down at him for a

moment before quietly leaving.

As soon as he left, Shen Zhixian opened his eyes. Although his face showed his exhaustion, his eyes were clear and fearful. A moment ago, in the hot spring, Yan Jin had wanted to kill him.

The feeling of suffocation was not because of a heart attack, but because Yan Jin was clenching his throat.

The so-called "Little Yan Jin" was probably a hallucination produced by him choking his throat.

Shen Zhixian froze for a while, only feeling cold in his heart.

Three years had already gone by, but it turned out that Yan Jin still couldn’t let it go.

If this was the case, then Shen Zhixian wanted to wash his hands of the man. Since Yan Jin couldn’t let the matter go, perhaps he should just hide away from him?

Thinking of this, he immediately thought of something else. Thanks to the heartache this time, his head was so stimulated that he finally remembered what had, when he was reading the book, been a small, insignificant detail.

It was clear that the more time passed, the more frequent the heart attacks would be. It would continue this way until the body was completely worn down, resulting in death.

The original Shen Zhixian had laboriously checked various ancient books and sent people to explore countless places. Finally, he discovered a flicker of hope.

A fish scale.

The inverse scale of an ancient fish demon had the ability to mend human flesh and bones and would also be able to heal his heart injury.

But this ancient fish demon was not easy to find. In fact, its existence had not been heard about for thousands of years.

The original Shen Zhixian could only be helpless. But, the current Shen Zhixian knew where to find the scale. The book briefly mentioned that Yan Jin hadn't become a devil for long before he entered an ancient secret realm, where he happened to retrieve the inverse scale of an ancient fish demon.

Yan Jin later donated this inverse scale to a wounded female music cultivator. When Yan Jin completed the unification of his devil qi, she resolutely rebelled against her master and joined Yan Jin to become one of his greatest supporters.

...She was also suspected to be the female lead.

The reason why it was only a theory was that, through to the very end of the book and before Yan Jin's death, he made no indication whether he wanted to be with a male or female lead.

Shen Zhixian sighed. If only he had a good relationship with Yan Jin. Perhaps, then, he could ask Yan Jin to give him a little bit of that scale. But, unfortunately...

He tried hard to remember who that female music cultivator was. Currently, the most well known sound cultivation sect was the Qianyin Pavilion. Shen Zhixian thought to himself that perhaps if he helped Yan Jin to chase his future wife, maybe he'll forgive him.

Shen Zhixian silently placed this idea into the scope of consideration and seriously spent some time pondering about Yan Jin and this female music cultivator. Finally, he sighed, still wondering what to do.

Feelings of fatigue surged up and down. Not bothering to get up to change

his clothes, he rolled up in the bedcover and soon fell asleep.

……

Shen Zhixian’s body had only gotten worse since the hot spring incident.

In just a few months, his heart ailment had repeated several times, each more serious than the next, and the whole person became much thinner.

However, with the two elders helping him to hide it, Yan Jin was able to conceal the matter with no one the wiser. Even Song Ming thought that he was just merely being lazy during winter, and that was the reason why he hadn’t been out in a long time.

Fourth Elder forbade Shen Zhixian to use his spiritual powers, and so he remained home all day, made drowsy by the warmth arrays. Every day, he would murmur that he’ll soon become a moldy mushroom.

“Oh, what a thing for this child to say.” Fourth Elder stuffed a pill into Shen Zhixian’s mouth. “Even if you become a mushroom, you’ll be the best-looking mushroom.”

Shen Zhixian distastefully chewed the pill, his whole face distorted by the bitter taste flooding his mouth. After half a moment passed by, he said, “Fourth Martial Uncle, can you add some sugar to the medicine next time?”

Fourth Elder stared at him. “Only good medicine tastes bitter, understand! You’re also an elder, not a small child. Why are you so afraid of suffering, just like a kid...Even your disciple could chew many of these pills without even uttering a sound of complaint, but you complained so much.”

Fourth Elder was very proficient in refining medicines and was particularly good at refining effective elixir. The only bad thing was that he believed that impurities would affect the efficacy of the medicine and thus insisted on ensuring that the original medicine not be tempered with in any way. As a result, Shen Zhixian had been eating these bitter medicines for several months now, and his body was just ready to revolt.

Fourth Elder held out a strange-looking pill with a strange smell. Shen Zhixian desperately closed his eyes and decided to just put them into his mouth like he really was dying. He chewed in tears and vaguely said, “Fourth Martial Uncle, do you still have that miracle elixir that will help guard the spirit root during the sixth rank ascension?”

“Yes. You want to give it to that disciple of yours again?”

Shen Zhixian swallowed his mouthful of bitterness, gulped down two cups of water in one breath, and said, “Yes, it’s for Yan Jin. I noticed that he’s on the verge of advancing.”

" ——Advancing?!" The elders took a breath, unable to believe it, "It's only been a few years and he’d nearly reached the sixth stage? Your apprentice's talent had not lost to you!"

Shen Zhixian laughed, not commenting on this matter, but thinking: Nonsense, this was the protagonist! He spread his hands and said, “Fourth Martial Uncle, how about you give me two pills, and I’ll pay you.”

Fourth Elder laughed and good-naturedly mocked him, “Just pamper your disciple.” After he handed over the spirit pills, he paused. “You heart...I was finally able to figure out a recipe a few days ago.”

After a moment’s hesitation, he added, “Unfortunately, it can only bring you some minor relief and won’t be able to cure you. You…”

Shen Zhixian lightly moved his eyebrows and displayed an easy smile. “This is already very good. Thank you, Fourth Martial Uncle. I’ve troubled you. I’ve already made some calculations and will leave for a period of time.”

He deliberately lowered his voice and notice that Fourth Elder had already disapproved even before he’d finished speaking.

“Fourth Martial Uncle, I know my own limitations.” After saying this, Shen

Zhixian softly whispered, “Moreover, I also have A’jin so nothing will happen.”

Fourth Elder hesitated for a moment, then finally nodded. With a sigh, he said, “Your disciple...he’s not too bad. I feel better knowing he’ll be with you. Going out will subject you to some grievances. Just don’t forget to come back.” The upright, kindly middle-aged face exposed a benevolent and tolerant smile. “After all, you’re all that’s left of senior brother.”

Shen Zhixian felt moved, and he carefully and gratefully made a sound of assent.

Obviously, if he were to have any mishaps, it would probably be at the hands of Yan Jin! But, of course, this matter couldn’t be said.

Shen Shixian’s innermost heart began to shed tears, and after the fourth elder left, he sorrowfully climbed back into bed.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 16

Even though Yan Jin's ascension to the next rank was expected, it still caught them off guard.

In the middle of the night, Shen Zhixian was jolted awake by a fierce, spiritual fluctuation. He hurriedly threw on a robe and took the spirit pill to knock on Yan Jin’s door.

There were 13 cultivation stages in this world. The sixth stage was a small watershed stage, which mainly tests whether the practitioner's state of mind was stable enough to continue cultivating. Only by rising to the sixth level can it be said that Yan Jin had successfully stepped into the world of cultivation.

Although Shen Zhixian felt that it should be fairly easy for Yan Jin to advance to the next level, especially with his qualifications and mentality, he still asked the elder for a panacea just in case. It turned out that this decision was a sound one.

After knocking for a while, there was still no response at the door. Shen Zhixian became concerned and pushed directly into the room. As a result, he was nearly hit by a spiritual energy that flung at him like a high-speed flying knife.

He quickly avoided it, and when he saw Yan Jin’s situation, he couldn’t help but draw in a breath.

Yan Jin was probably asleep when he suddenly realized that he was about to advance. As a result, he was only wearing his inner robe. Currently, the

situation didn’t look too good. He sat cross-legged on his bed, his body trembling slightly.

Shen Zhixian approached and saw that his face was alternating between blue and white, with cold sweat beading on his forehead. Shen Zhixian frowned slightly, afraid to disturb him. He could only sit on the side and protect him.

Every soul has seven emotions and six desires.

If all these emotions and desires became too much, the person will become obsessed, held in thrall by the demons of his mind. This was why the sixth level became the threshold of cultivation that screened people with unstable dispositions.

The surrounding spiritual energy began to fluctuate more and more violently. The thick energy surged toward Yan Jin, who could not resist and had no choice but to accommodate it. As he did so, his face gradually turned red.

Shen Zhixian was anxious, realizing that this was not good. With Yan Jin’s current state, the size of the spiritual sea in his body could not accommodate so much spiritual energy all at once.

Without thinking about it, he raised his hand and held Yan Jin’s wrist. Disregarding Fourth Elder’s repeated orders not to use his spiritual force, he mobilized his spiritual force to block the surging spiritual energy and any other external distractions.

It seemed as if the spiritual energy in the entire peak had gathered here. Shen Zhixian gasped for breath, his heart gradually filled with agony. But, he dared not stop. If he did, Yan Jin would be swallowed completely and torn to shreds by these violent spiritual energy.

Shen Zhixian’s vision began to darken as his spiritual force collided with the spiritual energy. Meanwhile, Yan Jin’s body was incapable of holding so much energy, and the forced expansion brought him unbearable pain.

“Master!” Yan Jin suddenly said, his voice full of suffering. He seemed to be enduring great pain, and his voice shook as he pleaded, “Please let your disciple...please…”

Shen Zhixian was shocked by the sudden noise. When he looked up, he was surprised to find himself enveloped by overwhelming darkness. All kinds of sounds instantly filled his ears, loud and chaotic.

Yan Jin’s mood fluctuated so much that it affected the surrounding spiritual energy, thus drawing Shen Zhixian’s consciousness into his mental dreamscape.

After the initial darkness came a plain white landscape. The human voice dissipated, replaced by the chilly wind. As soon as Shen Zhixian regained his sight, he saw a mass of snowflakes falling down on his face.

He hurriedly tried to avoid it but the snowflakes flew through him and he felt nothing at all.

Shen Zhixian came to the realization that he’d fallen into Yan Jin’s subconsciousness and had fallen right into the pivotal moment of calamity, which was likely the source of Yan Jin’s inability to stabilize his ascension.

He wanted to find out what had caused Yan Jin’s instability so he didn’t rush to leave. Looking around, he realized that this place was….the Cliff of Reflection? Yan Jin was dreaming of the Cliff of Reflection?

In Yan Jin’s subsconscious, Shen Zhixian was just a mass of air. When he moved his mind, he “walked” toward the peak.

A thin youth was curled up in the small, shallow cave. His clothing was ragged and shabby, his body nearly buried in a grave of snow and ice. His half-opened fingers trembled for a long time and he was unable to condense even a trace of spiritual qi. His spirit root was clearly suffering from frostbite.

Shen Zhixian froze, thinking that this was not the same as he remembered. But, it was in line with the original plot...Then, why would Yan Jin have such a dream?

The youth's face was pale as porcelain, so white it practically blended in with the snow. Shen Zhixian felt distressed. After all, this was the protagonist that he liked and the disciple that he'd raised for several years.

He felt the impulse to touch the youth's face, but he was unable to touch anything. Even so, the youth seemed to feel something. His eyes opened slightly, gazing in Shen Zhixian's direction, his expression a little confused.

In the next moment, the scene suddenly changed. The flower in front of Shen Zhixian was suddenly covered in blood. The youth fell to the ground, his whole body trembling, as he turned his face with difficulty toward him.

"Master…" The youth's face was small and desperate. His voice was thick with blood as he pleaded, "I beg you…"

He had wounds all over his body, which was slashed into a bloody mess by a sword. His was in extreme pain and his voice was hoarse beyond recognition. "Please...please let your disciple…"

Shen Zhixian was so distressed that his hands were shaking. He wanted so much to hug the youth, but he could do nothing but take a few quick steps toward him.

The indifferent man dressed in white walked casually through Shen Zhixian until he stood in front of the youth. Looking down at the boy, he raised his sword slowly and ruthlessly, converging his qi.

The sharp point of the sword rested on one of the few spots of skin still intact on his body, and blood beaded out.

Shen Zhixian looked at the other "self" in shock. After emotionlessly cutting of the youth's spirit root, the man in white seemed to have lost interest in him. He threw away the sword and left indifferently. Shen

Zhixian’s whole soul was shaking, and he replayed the scene over again in his mind. No wonder!

That was it!

In that split second, all the mysteries were solved. Why was the youth so repelled by him and even showed such hatred toward him? That was because Yan Jin was reborn.

It explained why Yan Jin’s distrust toward him was so deep and, even after three years, he was still so guarded and why he alienated himself from Shen Zhixian. Because, in Yan Jin’s eyes, he was the murderer who severed his spirit root and killed him.

Shen Zhixian returned to his own consciousness and regained his senses after a moment. Upon seeing that Yan Jin was nearly unable to hold on any longer, he quickly located the spirit pill and tried to feed it to him.

But Yan Jin was very uncooperative, struggling constantly and avoiding him due to the recycling torture in his dream. Shen Zhixia repeatedly tried to force him to eat the spirit pill and it was only after some difficulty that he was able to succeed.

It was fortunate that he’d asked Fourth Elder for the spirit pill. Even if Yan Jin’s ascension failed this time, he would not be too harmed by it.

The pill turned into fluid the moment it entered the body. It acted quickly, gradually soothing the chaotic spiritual energy. Yan Jin’s body was still trembling slightly, but he was clearly slowly calming down.

“Master…”

Shen Zhixian tried to coax Yan Jin like he did three years ago. As he gently patted his back, he heard Yan Jin emit a low groan.

Thinking that Yan Jin was awake, he pulled away to put some distance

between them and found that Yan Jin’s eyes were still closed, his long eyelashes covered with beads of sweat.

Shen Zhixian rolled up his sleeves and wiped away his sweat for him. He didn’t say anything and, seeing that Yan Jin was no longer shivering, he felt more at ease. He was about to help Yan Jin lie down when he yanked at his sleeve.

“Master…” Yan Jin cracked his eyes opened a sliver. There seemed to be a mist within those black eyes, and he seemed a little confused, as if still immersed in a dream. He said, “Are you going to kill me?”

Shen Zhixian’s heart jumped and he looked down a him, uncertain whether he was still dreaming or awake.

There was a trace of tiredness and fragility on his handsome face. He blinked and that mist within the depths of his eyes became thicker, as if he was slipping back into his dreams. “Master.”

Shen Zhixian was stunned.

“....It hurts so much. You still killed disciple with one strike of your sword.” He gasped and muttered, “Just one sword move...Then, it's over…”

Yan Jin’s voice gradually faded and his hand dropped away from Shen Zhxian’s sleeve. His eyes closed and he extended his neck slightly, his body unguarded, as if awaiting his inevitable execution.

His sword rested next to the bed.

Whether it was him or Shen Zhixian, it only took a single moment to take it in hand.

Yan Jin’s spiritual force gradually calmed, the density nearly completely diffused. This was a sign of failure to advance, because Yan Jin could not escape the border of his dream.

Shen Zhixia pressed his lips together, reached for the sword, and tightened his fingers around it. Then, he gently but firmly placed the hilt in Yan Jin's hand and used a little force to wrap his fingers around it.

"Open your eyes."

Yan Jan opened his eyes blankly.

"Look down."

Yan Jin obeyed the single command and, in one action, looked down at the sword.

Shen Zhixian covered Yan Jin's hand with his own. Together, they held the hilt with one hand and the scabbard with the other. Shen Zhixian exerted a little force and the sword slid halfway out of its sheath, the gleaming blade exuding a small chill.

"Did you see that?" Shen Zhixian calmly said. "The Master gave you a sword so you would not be afraid. Whoever wants to bully you, simply draw your sword."

As soon as his voice fell, the spiritual energy suddenly surged, indicating that Yan Jin had heard and understood him. The barrier that imprisoned his spiritual sea immediately shattered.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 17

What happened this night was too unexpected for them both.

Yan Jin didn’t know what to think. When he looked at Shen Zhixian, his gaze was calm but his heart was astonished by this unexpected event. Shen Zhixian also didn’t know what to think. He just pretended to be calm as he walked out the door and closed it firmly behind him. Yan Jin stared after him vacantly, even as the weakness in his body disappeared.

He looked down at the sword with an expressionless face. Gradually, the mist in his eyes dissipated.
He'd dreamed about his last life again, causing his emotions to fluctuate. When he opened his eyes, he couldn’t extinguish between reality and dreams.

He didn’t know when Shen Zhixian had entered his quarters or what he did after he came in...But, according to Shen Zhixian’s reaction just now, perhaps he didn’t find any clues. At most, he probably thought Yan Jin was dreaming about being bullied in the past.

The warmth of Shen Zhixian’s palm still lingered at the back of his hand. He shoved the sword back into its sheath and threw it next to the bed.

The sword knocked against something, creating a clinking sound. Yan Jin looked over and saw that it was a small jade bottle.

It was the bottle that Shen Zhixian has used to hold the spirit pill. When he came, he’d tossed the bottle here and forgot to take it back.

Yan Jin picked up the small jade bottle and shook it but no sounds came out. It was empty.

The bottle cap was not tightly closed and the faint smell of medicine emanated from the small opening. Yan Jin pursed his lips, suddenly realizing that this scent was a little familiar, as if...

He licked his lips with the tip of his tongue and tasted a hint of residual medicine. After a moment of hesitation, he gently lifted the bottle cap and placed the opening to his nose to sniff it, confirming his guess.

After taking in the faint scent of medicine,Yan Jin was silent for a long time before re-inserting the bottle cap, leaving the bed barefoot, and pulling out a small package from within the cabinet.

Because it was rarely pulled out, the small parcel still looked very new. Yan Jin opened the small package, put the empty jade bottle inside, re-tied the knot, and then put it back in the cabinet.

When the small parcel was put back, it emitted clinking sounds as the jade bottles inside collided.

Crisp and sweet.

After that night, it was as if nothing had happened.

The two stupid master and disciple continued to get along peacefully on the surface.

Yan Jin remained taciturn. Shen Zhixian didn’t know what he was planning and continued to act as if nothing happened. He treated Yan Jin as usual. Since matters had come to this, he was willing to pretend to be stupid. After all, to behave otherwise, the harm to him would outweigh the benefits.

At least he must be stupid until he managed to solve the problem of his heart injury.

Fish scale, ah...Ever since he remembered it, he'd begun to secretly plot on how to get his hands on it. This scale was precious and rare, and it was, after all, related to his life. Since he couldn't feel reassured enough to rely on other people, he could only rely on himself.

Unfortunately, this matter was easy to think about but difficult to do. He didn't know where the secret realm was located. The only thing he knew was that Yan Jin might enter this secret realm in the future.

...In the end, the protagonist's thigh still needed to be held.

Shen Zhixian sighed sadly. It seemed that he would still have to coax Yan Jin in order to find the secret realm and the fish scale.

When this was over, perhaps they could talk openly and honestly with each other. As for what the results may be...Forget it. He'll think about it later.

…….

Winter gradually drifted further away, turning the weather increasingly warmer. Under the Fourth Elder's meticulous care, Shen Zhixian's heart injury had stabilized a great deal. It no longer broke out so easily, thus allowing him to use a little spiritual force.

Meanwhile, Qingyun Sect marked the first month of the lunar year with beating drums and began planning for its five year Sword Competition.

"....This is a trifling matter. Otherwise, Zong Ming might misunderstood that I'm lazy….It's fine. After all, I still have A'jin, ah."

When Yan Jin entered the room, Shen Zhixian had just cut off Fourth Elder's words. As he listened to the last two sentences, he remained standing to the side, not saying a word.

Shen Zhixian didn't mind that that Yan Jin heard. Recently, he couldn't use much spiritual force and so it would be necessary to make Yan Jin work hard. Once this event is over...

Shen Zhixian pulled his thoughts back and said to him, “The Sword Competition is only a few months away. The Shilian Mountain used for the test hasn’t been cleared in a long time. After a few days, when you’re ready, you can come with me to take a look.”

Yan Jin answered in agreement.

Shen Zhixian gave him a few more brief orders.

In addition to being open to ordinary disciples in the sect, the Sword Competition also encouraged people who wanted to enter the sect to participate.

The top three disciples will not only get the chance to choose a sword from the Hidden Sword Pavilion but may also be accepted as a personal disciple to one of the elders or even the Sect Leader. Being accepted as a personal disciple was like having a one thousand mile head start.

Therefore, many people took great pains just to sign up.

Shen Zhixian’s task was to inspect the mountain and set up the trials for the disciples and competitors.

The mountain typically contained a lot of little demonized beasts that wouldn't be too difficult for ordinary disciples to handle. However, five years had passed, and it would be prudent for Shen Zhixian to inspect the place, clean up the more dangerous monsters, and add in more small demonized beasts as needed.

Because Shen Zhixian had been concealing the fact that his heart injury had worsened, so as to prevent anyone from making calculations that should not be made, he could only take Yan Jin with him on this errand. Even then, Yan Jin was the main force and ended up doing most of the grunt work. Shen Zhixian only accompanied him on the day they were set to clear out monsters.

Shilian Mountain was actually an extremely wide and long mountain range, which can accommodate nearly a thousand people to enter and practice without encountering each other.

Inside the mountain was a lock spirit array that, when activated, could suppress the disciple's spiritual force. This trial was said to test the disciples viability without the aid of their spiritual force.

"After rely on one's spiritual force for a long time, it is inevitable that one will forget some basic skills." As Shen Zhixian opened the special beast containment bag and let out the small demonized beasts contained within, he said, "This trial is quite interesting."

The small demonized beasts immediately scattered, each looking for a suitable resting place. For a while, the area bustled with liveliness.

In fact, these demonized beasts were all very common monsters, such as massive, squawking ducks; big, sharp-teeth rabbits; large jumping frogs; slightly poisonous giants liked to lazily nestle under trees; great barking turtledove; and so on. There was a bit of everything here.

These beasts were not ferocious monsters; they were just relatively large. Spiritual force would not be needed to deal with them. Just using brute force would be enough.

In addition to the spirit lock array, the mountain also contained ordinary isolation formations and teleportation formations. The isolation formation was meant to prevent others from sneaking in and out of Shilian Mountain. Meanwhile, the teleportation arrays would allow disciples to crush a token when in danger and immediately be transported to safety.

Shen Zhixian inspected various positions. Although he was not proficient in advanced formations, he could still handle the more common ones.

After taking care of a few small problems, he noticed that something was wrong. "Why is there an extra spirit jade buried here? That's weird." He

pondered for a moment. “This is a normal isolation formation, but this extra spirit jade would prevent the formation from working as intended.”

An ordinary isolation formation could only restrict low-spirited people from entering and exiting, but it would not completely prevent contacts with the outside world. Moreover, it would also not interfere with the teleportation formation.

However, with the addition of the extra piece of spirit jade, the formation method immediately changes. It would not only forbid people from entering and exiting the transmission, but it would also isolate that person from the outside world. The person inside would not be able to get nor send news, and it would be impossible for the outside world to know what was happening here.

At that time, the group of young disciples would have no spiritual power and likely wouldn’t be able to escape from danger. In fact, they might be trapped here instead!

Shen Zhixian frowned. Aside from the Sword Competition, the mountain was usually sealed. No one would be able to enter. Then, how did this problem come about?

The spirit jade was buried in a location that was too coincidental for it to be unintentional. It shouldn’t be the work of any young disciples with limited spiritual force. As it was, this direct modification was perfectly balanced, ensuring that the original formation would not collapse when modified.

The same care would have to be taken if one were to remove the extra spirit jade.

Shen Zhixian pondered for a moment and decided to ask Yan Jin to help dig out the spiritual jade first. But, when he looked back, he saw that Yan Jin was standing one meter away, his face stoically calm, making Shen Zhixian felt nervous for no reason.

He composed himself. “A’jin, come and help me.”

Yan Jin stood quietly, seeming to have no intention of coming over. He shook his head and said slowly, “Master, goodbye.”

Shen Zhixian suddenly felt an ominous premonition. Yan Jin slight raised his hand and broke a spirit stone with his fingers. Shen Zhixian’s spiritual force was immediately suppressed. Yan Jin had started the formation!

A thick fog swirled up and completely covered Shen Zhixian in a few breaths. He faintly saw Yan Jin’s figure and instinctively rushed toward him.

Because of this unknown danger, Shen Zhixian’s desire for survival was stimulated to the extreme. This move was very powerful, such that even Yan Jin had to take a few steps back to stabilize himself.

Immediately after Shen Zhixian threw himself at Yan Jin, he tightly clashed the person’s hand, confirmed that he was still alive, and hurriedly looked behind him.

In one glance, he saw that the dense, menacing fog was floating over. It avoided the position that Yan Jin had previously been standing in and soon engulfed them.

Yan Jin!

With a jolt, the teleportation formation was initiated. Shen Zhixian realized everything at once. People were forbidden to enter or exit Shilian Mountain at will. But, a few days ago...

A few days ago, he’d order Yan Jin to come and do a preliminary exploration!

The sudden appearance of the spirit jade and the small space that the dense fog had avoided were all related to Yan Jin!

The apparent peace in the past few days could not hide the calculations

underneath.

Shen Zhixian’s spiritual force was completely suppressed. He and Yan Jin were standing next to each other, and he could feel that Yan Jin’s spiritual force was also quickly dissipating. This meant that the formation was also working on Yan Jin.

This gave him a small measure of relief. At least, this way, Yan Jin wouldn't be able to get rid of him so easily.

The fog was so thick it was impossible to see through it, and the area shook so much that it was enough to make people feel nauseous. Shen Zhixian’s hand slowly and cautious slipped down. Despite Yan Jin’s resistance, he gritted his teeth and opened his fingers little by little.

Then he squeezed Yan Jin’s fingers between his own fingers and fastened them tightly.

Interlocking fingers.

The strongest, most difficult to separate position.

As they were tossed about, Shen Zhixian clenched his teeth, thinking, it would be impossible for Yan Jin, this little cub, to shake him off this time!

Xixi: As I was translating this, I couldn't help thinking: Can three years of care and support make up for a year of cruel abuse that culminated in a moment of complete devastation? I'm actually glad Yan Jin won't forgive "Shen Zhixian" so easily. Sometimes, we can't help but feel conflicted. When someone is good to us, we often felt pressured to return their goodwill with forgiveness. But, at least Yan Jin is making Shen Zhixian work hard (for something that he actually didn't do, poor guy). And, Yan Jin is no longer trying to kill Shen Zhixian. Or is he? XD

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 18

After the teleportation was completed, the fog dissipated. Once he became more clear headed, Yan Jin uneasily tried to pull his hand away from Shen Zhixian's grasp. In fact, he'd never had such intimate contacts with other people before.

Immediately, Shen Zhixian vigilantly tightened his hold. He was a little angry that this tool would unabashedly play such a trick, and he was also annoyed with himself. Knowing that Yan Jin was reborn with hatred in his heart, why was he so unprepared?

Shen Zhixian thought about it and decided that he'd been led astray by the man's beauty.

From the beginning until now, Yan Jin had been silent. At this moment, he stood motionless, looking straight ahead without any expression on his face, his lips pressed tightly together.

Shen Zhixian stood next to him and stared at his profile.

At a glance, this was indeed the protagonist he'd fancied. When he was reading the book, he thought that the protagonist was very handsome, just from the description alone. Now, looking at the actual person, he still looked good at 360 degrees, with no imperfections. This was his favorite type.

Knowing that his master was staring at him, Yan Jin couldn't stand it anymore. He turned his head slightly and said in a low voice, "Master.."

He hesitated, then turned his gaze down to their fastened hands. “Hands…”

Shen Zhixian calmly continued to look at him. Noticing that Yan Jin’s five fingers were a little stiff and that he looked overwhelmed, Shen Zhixian casually said, “What’s the matter? I'm just holding your hand.”

He focused his gaze on Yan Jin’s taunt jaw and let out a small laugh, saying lightly, “The Master and disciple are of one mind and has the same goal. A’jin will not abandon Master, right?”

Yan Jin’s throat moved but he did not answer.

The experience that came with spending four years with Shen Zhixian clearly told him that Shen Zhixian was angry.

As soon as Shen Zhixian was angry, he would laugh, smiling easily and peacefully. His eyebrows would raise slightly, his lips tipped up in a somewhat mocking smile. The whole person obviously looked elegant and calm, but it made people feel cold and set their hair on end.

He’d treated Sect Leader Song like this, Yan Shen like this, and other people who had angered him like this.

But, it seemed...this was the first time that Shen Zhixian was truly angry with him.

In the past, Shen Zhixian had alway been lenient with him, even indulgently so.

Yan Jin suddenly had a strange, indescribable feeling in his heart. In the past few years, Shen Zhixian could be said to have been too good to him, almost completely in line with the “master” that he’d longed for in his childhood.

As someone who’d been wandering alone in the cold world for so long, he’d always treated warmth like a treasure. Late at night, Yan Jin would repeatedly tell himself to cherish the present and forget the nightmare. But,

somehow, he could never do it.

Whenever he'd determined to do so, there would always be a cold and deep voice tempting him in a dream, telling him to do whatever he wanted, to destroy the world.

Then, he would suddenly awakened, sweating coldly, his heart pounding, as if he was swaying between life and death. The little unwillingness and hatred were like a gangrene spreading deep within the bones. Just peel a little away and it would immediately re-grow to entangle him once more.

"...A'jin? Did you hear my question?" Shen Zhixian's smile became more and more kind. "Do you want to stand here with Master until we grow old?"

Yan Jin looked back at him, realizing that he'd been lost in thought for a while. He hadn't even heard the first half of Shen Zhixian's words. For the first time, he seemed to be at a loss about what to do or say.

"Master…." Yan Jan didn't know what Shen Zhixian had asked and merely softly said, "The formation only limits spiritual force and isolates the person within from the outside world. After five days, the teleportation formation would start again and you would be able to go out."

This time, he actually didn't want to use a fierce hand to calculate Shen Zhixian. In the end, he still remembered in his heart the various cares that Shen Zhixian had shown him over the years.

He couldn't forget the nightmare, but he still thought about how well Shen Zhixian had treated him in the past few years. He finally decided on a compromise: trapping Shen Zhixian for a few days so he would be able to quietly leave, forcibly cutting off their relationship.

Unfortunately, it failed.

Five days.

Yan Jin was thinking deeply on his end. But, on this end, Shen Zhixian was

pondering the number of days. Five days was neither too long nor too short. Even if he had no spiritual power, as long as he acted cautiously, it shouldn’t be too difficult to stay alive.

It seemed that this little cub hadn’t completely lost his conscience to the point of deceiving the teacher to destroy the ancestors.

He was just about to ask Yan Jin if he recalled where the formation was so they could alter it and return. But, Yan Jin’s next sentence killed this hope.

“The place where Master originally stood was linked to a safe place without monsters. But, now, disciples don’t know where we are.

Shen Zhixian: “.....”

Shen Zhixian silently looked around. The surrounding trees were dense and lush, and the area still looked as if they were still on Shilian Mountain. However, he didn’t know which peak it was or how far away they were from the modification formation.

After Yan Jin said his long sentence, he became silent once more. Shen Zhixian took a deep breath to calm himself down. “The Fourth Elders usually comes to the fifth peak every few days. When that happens…”

Fourth Martial Uncle would discover that he wasn’t there and would surely start looking for him.

Yan Jin lowered his eyes. “Yesterday, the disciples met Fourth Elder and told him that, after you finished with Shilian Mountain, you plan to go into seclusion for as long as half a month or at least ten days.”

Shen Zhixian: “.....”

Yan Jin once again added, “At that time, Third Elder was also there. Third Elder said that they won’t disturb you for a while.”

Shen Zhixian: “.....”

Shen Zhixian was extremely angry and he smiled over clenched teeth. “You really plan well, didn’t you?”

With his expression slightly cold, Shen Zhixian continued to hold Yan Jin’s hand as he considered their current position, then dragged him forward.

However, he hadn’t walked for more than two quarters of an hour before his stomach began to growl with hunger. Without spiritual power, he would naturally be like an ordinary person and be incapable of abstaining from eating. Moreover, he’d gotten up late this morning and didn’t have time to eat.

Therefore, he was even more annoyed that he would have to listen to the body’s needs.

He finally released the hand that he’d been clinging to and threatened lightly, “A’jin, if you caused this kind of upheaval again, Master will drive you out.”

"....." Yan Jin, who’d just taken a few steps forward, suddenly stopped and looked back Shen Zhixian thoughtfully.

Shen Zhixian immediately regained his senses, realizing that he shouldn’t treat this disciple with common sense. He resolutely repented. “I said it wrong. Let me start over. A’jin, if you did this kind of thing again, don’t even think about leaving this master’s tutelage for the rest of your life.”

Yan Jin was silent for a moment, then he turned around to busy himself with picking fruits and gathering dead woods. Once done, he killed a big rabbit that was just recently put in and hadn’t fully understood the situation yet.

Since they couldn’t use spells, they had to find a mountain spring by following the sound of water. Shen Zhixian tried to take out items from his space storage bag but realized that he had no spiritual power and wouldn’t be able to open it. Therefore, he could only sit down and start tossing the pile of wood together.

Meanwhile, Yan Jin went to the mountain spring to clean the rabbit.

He'd done these things many times in the past. Although he hadn't done it in a few years, he was still very familiar with the process and quickly cleaned the rabbit. As a result, when he carried in the rabbit, Shen Zhixian was still stressing over the pile of dry wood.

Before Shen Zhixian transmigrated, he had a variety of convenient kitchen utensils, such as a gas stove and an induction cooker. After transmigrating, there were disciples to serve him. Therefore, he never done these kinds of things before.

When he saw that Yan Jin had returned, he gave a slight cough. If he dropped the dead branch in his hands and casually took the wooden vine that was twined around the rabbit. He watched as Yan Jin calmly and skillfully arranged the wooden pile before taking out a small folded notebook with lighters within.

Shen Zhixian didn't know whether to sigh over how Yan Jin could do anything or to be surprised that Yan Jin carried lighters with him. In the end, he chose silence and merely watched as Yan Jin cooked the rabbit in silence.

Without seasoning the taste was rather blank, but fortunately, the meat was delicious. Yan Jin's cooking technique was very good. Not bad at all.

Shen Zhixian finished a rabbit leg, followed by another piece of meat, before becoming completely full. The rest of the rabbit ended up falling into Yan Jin's stomach instead.

Once they had enough to eat and drink, they would have to locate the formation and leave as soon as possible. Doing so would result in them suffering less.

Afterward, they didn’t know how long they’d walked or how far they’d gone. Finally, they saw that the mountain shrubbery and forest had fallen back to display the edge of a cliff.

Shen Zhixian had walked for a long time. He was breathing hard, and his heart was starting to palpitate. He stopped, frowning, and coughed a few time. His voice was a little

Shen Zhixian walked for a long time, there was a snack, frowning, and stopped frowning, and coughed a few times, his voice was a little husky: "Wait."

At this time, in this place, if he had a heart attack, he would be killed.

Shen Zhixian reached into his sleeve and took out a small jade bottle. Fortunately, he was afraid that he wouldn’t have time to flip through his storage bag. Earlier, he’d picked out a bottle of medicine and brought it out with him.

Shen Zhixian pulled off the lid and was about to pour out a pill to eat, when suddenly, he caught something from the corner of his eyes. His facial expression changed as he dropped the jade bottle and pulled Yan Jin aside. “Be careful!”

An adult gray snake as thick as a man’s arm suddenly flew down from the nearby tree, landing directly where Jan Yin had been standing.

Shen Zhixian recognized this snake. Although it looked very inconspicuous, it was actually not very shy. It liked to coil on tree branches. When it meets a prey, it would rise up and move with extreme speed and strength. With a full blow, it would even knock down a hardwood tree a diameter in foot!

If this snake had managed to hit Yan Jin, who had no spiritual protection, it would probably strike a hole in him!

Fortunately, Yan Jin also responded extremely fast, almost completely pulling his sword out nearly at the same moment that Shen Zhixian spoke.

Yan Jin immediately realized what was happening and waved his sword without hesitation.

The gray snack was cut in two at the waist. However, the strong pulse made Yan Jin, who had no spiritual power, to take a few steps back. Even his sword was shaken.

The ground near the cliff was shattered by this force. When Yan Jin took a step back, he happened to slip on a loose rack and tumbled off the cliff!

Shen Zhixian's expression changed. He instinctively rushed toward Yan Jin and managed to grab his hand by the cliff's edge.

Yan Jin dangled dangerously at the edge of the cliff, which was so smooth that there was hardly anything to provide purchase for Yan Jin to climb back up. He could only rely on Shen Zhixian's hand.

The gray snake hadn't died yet. The snake's head twisted continuously, it's smelly blood saturating the ground underneath. It twisted so much that it practically rolled that top on Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian watched from the corner of his eyes as the snake came closer and closer. Therefore, in the next moment, the snack's twisting had caused it to knock against the small jade bottle, which immediately rolled toward the cliff's edge!

On one side was the medicine that could prevent a heart attack and protect his life. On the other side was Yan Jin, who was handing precarious off the cliff.

Shen Zhixian's pupils dilated sharply.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 19

As Shen Zhixian gripped Yan Jin with his right hand, his left hand clung to the edge of the cliff to prevent himself from being dragged down.

The small jade bottle had rolled not far from where his right hand was clasping on to Yan Jin. As long as he let go of Yan Jin’s hand, he would be able to grab it with ease. But, from beginning to end, his grip on Yan Jin remained firm.

Yan Jin wanted to catch the jade bottle for Shen Zhixian, but it merciless brushed pass his fingertips and sailed down the cliff.

The cliff was so high that the little jade bottle’s fall became silence almost immediately.

Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth and began to pull the person up. But, half of the serpent was still rolling and spasming. It slammed into the hand holding Yan Jin and the serpent’s head snapped forward, suddenly opening its mouth to bite Shen Zhixian’s hand!

If its mouth had managed to close, Shen Zhixian’s hand would have been cut in two.

Jaws clenched tight, Shen Zhixian released his hold on the cliff’s edge long enough to quickly grab the serpent and pulled it off him. The serpent’s teeth were sharp, truly worthy of easily piercing flesh. The venom had barely managed to spray out a little before Shen Zhixian threw the serpent over the cliff.

The momentum exerted by this throw caused Shen Zhixian’s body to drag forward until most of his upper body was hanging off the cliff.

But he still held Yan Jin's hand tightly.

Yan Jin's mask of silence was finally broken. He restrained the complex emotions in his heart, only to find out that his voice was tight, so tight that he could only shout "Master" and could no longer say anything else.

The gray serpent’s blood was pungent and sticky, making Shen Zhixian’s head feel faint. It took him a long time to pull Yan Jin up.

His heart pounded wildly, and he closed his eyes, enduring a moment of dizziness. Not saying a word to Yan Jin, he staggered away from the edge of the cliff and sat down against a sturdy tree, sighing tiredly.

Yan Jin, who had been on the verge of death, was better off than Shen Zhixian. He hurriedly followed, tearing his sleeve to wipe away the dirty blood on Shen Zhixian’s hand.

Shen Zhixian supported himself with his long legs. One hand was held by Yan Jin while the other hand was arbitrarily placed on one knee. As his back leaned against the trunk, his head was slightly tilted, his eyes closed and his breath coming out in soft pants.

If one were to ignore his blood-stained lips, one would say that he currently looked like a swordsman who’d walked the horizon with sword in hand and who’d came here to rest away his fatigue, looking both casual and wanton.

Yan Jin knew that Shen Zhixian was exhausted. The gray serpent had attacked without any warning, right as Shen Zhixian was about to take his medicine. Not only did he not manage to eat his medicine, but he’d undergone such a trail and was even bitten by the serpent.

Fortunately, the gray serpent’s poison was not lethal. It could only make the

person feel dizzy and befuddled. Ordinary people would remain this way for two to three days. Now that Shen Zhixian was in this situation, he would likely be affected for at least half the night.

“Master, why...didn’t you just let me go?”

Yan Jin’s question drew Shen Zhixian’s attention back. Shen Zhixian half-opened his eyes, squinting, as he looked at Yan Jin.

The young man was kneeling in front of him, his expression grave, as if he was a small beast that had done something naughty and was anxiously waiting for an unknown punishment

Looking at him like this, Shen Zhixian suddenly wanted to laugh a little. Instead, he coughed and held back his amusement.

In fact, this was an excellent time to play an emotion card. Shen Zhixian lowered his eyelids and let out a disappointed sigh, as if he was helpless and could do nothing but be lenient. ‘You already called for your master, so how could Master let you go?”

Yan Jin was emotionally moved and astonishment flashed across his eyes. His lips trembled as he searched his mind for what to say next. In the end, he could only say, “Master...rest first. I won’t leave you.”

This was exactly the answer Shen Zhixian wanted.

Although Yan Jin deeply remembered his past events, he was, by nature, a steady and reliable man who could clearly distinguish between love and hate.

He’d just calculated against Shen Zhixian. In return, Shen Zhixian saved his life, completely disregarding the previous scheme against him.

Shen Zhixin laid down half of his worries and thought drowsily that Yan Jin likely wouldn’t abandon him in the middle of the night and slip away secretly by himself.

Yan Jin didn’t leave. Although he did initially have that thought, when he nearly fell off the cliff and was saved by Shen Zhixian, the thought completely disappeared.

The night was deep, and the atmosphere in the mountain soon grew chilly. Shen Zhixian lost his spiritual protection and felt the chill despite his sleepiness. He couldn’t help but shiver and curl up uncomfortably.

He leaned against the tree, and the back of his head rested on the trunk. As he slept, his head slowly slipped sideways.

Yan Jin saw this and stretched out his hand to gently touch Shen Zhixian’s forehead, preventing him from falling over sideways.

Just then, a gust of cold wind blew through them, and Shen Zhixian began to shiver. Even in his sleep, his frowned deeply and turned his head unhappily.

Feeling the warmth of Yan Jin’s hand against his forehead, he must have thought it was very comfortable. He nodded subconsciously and murmured, “Cold…”

Yan Jin noticed that something wasn’t right. He put down the sword that he’d been holding with his other hand and carefully covered Shen Zhixian’s forehead with his palm.

Slightly feverish.

Shen Zhixian had a low-grade fever.

The wind rustled the leaves and moonlight dripped through the gaps in the branches, reflecting mottled shadows.

He hesitated briefly before taking off his overcoat and placing it over Shen Zhixian’s shivering form. Then, he gently wrapped one arm around Shen Zhixian’s shoulder and pulled him against his chest, trying to block the cool

breeze from touching him.

The broad, hot chest slightly thawed out some of the chill wrapped around Shen Zhixian's body. His eyebrows relaxed and his head dipped to rest against the crook of Yan Jin's shoulders. He paused, then adjusted his body into a more comfortable posture. Subconsciously, his hand moved, sliding down to rest casually on Yan Jin's thigh.

Shen Zhixian's hand was cold, but Yan Jin felt as if that place touched by him seemed to be burning.

It felt incredibly hot.

He sat stiffly under the tree with Shen Zhixian held intimately in his arms. The sound of Shen Zhixian's subtle breathing drifted repeatedly into his ears.

Yan Jin's hand remained stiff and awkward for a long time, before he finally, carefully, rested it lightly against the man's thin, white shoulders.

Shen Zhixian's had thin, delicate bones, such that he merely had to reach out and his arm and his hand would completely wrap around the man's entire shoulder.

The waist was even thinner than the shoulders…

Yan Jin recalled that when he picked Shen Zhixian up from the hot spring that day, he'd captured Shen Zhixian's wait.

It felt too fragile.

This was the same person who, when he was young, astounded the cultivation world with his sword, winning the coveted spot of the Qingyun Sect Leader's personal inheriting disciple. Using his sword and his intelligence, he carved a name for himself. So far, no one had surpassed him.

It was a pity that it was too short-lived.

As Yan Jin was thinking, Shen Zhixian suddenly rubbed his head against his earlobe. To his surprise, Yan Jin felt that his ears were a little itchy and a little hot. He turned his head blankly and looked at Shen Zhixian’s sleeping face. The sight gave birth to a feeling that he’d not even noticed.

The stars flickered in the night sky, and silence wrapped snugly around them.

Fortunately, no monsters came to make trouble, and the night passed quietly. But, as night gradually shifted into dawn, causing the dew to rise, the resulting humidity and chill made Shen Zhixian uncomfortable all over again.

The damp and cold chill had seeped through Shen Zhixian’s clothes and penetrated into his bones, causing pain and numbness. He frowned uncomfortably and instinctively shrank into Yan Jin’s arms.

Yan Jin noticed that there was something wrong. He pursed his lips and tightened his hold on the man.

This move only incentized the sick.

Shen Zhixian shifted sleepily and buried himself deeper into Yan Jin’s arms. But, he still felt cold. The hand that was originally resting on Yan Jin’s thigh quietly slid up and grabbed Yan Jin’s collar, searching for the desired source of heat.

But the hot source of heat was blocked by a layer of fabric. Shen Shixian was very dissatisfied. He mumbled incoherently and began to pull hard on Yan Jin’s collar.

The lining of Yan Jin’s inner shirt was fairly flimsy so Shen Zhixian was able to loosen the neckline. Slender, white fingertips touched his naked chest, and he couldn’t help immediately pulling away from the hot temperature.

But, the heat immediately dispelled the Shen Zhixian’s chill, bringing with it a comfortable sensation, which made him happy. He continued to pull harder at the neckline, as if trying to pull the entire heat source out so he could lean against the whole person.

It didn’t work.

Yan Jin hesitated and tried to stop Shen Zhixian. He was originally holding Shen Zhixian’s shoulder with one hand and holding his sword with the other hand. Now, he could only lower the sword so that he could catch Shen Zhixian’s hand to prevent him from moving.

But, Shen Zhixian had finally found the desired heat source. How could he give it up so easily? An ill person was typically the most unreasonable. The more Yan Jin obstructed him, the more he felt wronged. The more he felt wronged, the harder he tried.

Not only did Yan Jin had to deal with Shen Zhixian’s wandering hands, he also had to pay attention to their surroundings while also taking care not to inadvertently hurt him. Therefore, Shen Zhixian was able to find an opportunity to tear the thin lining of his collar.

Just a slight tear.

But, it was enough to give Shen Zhixian the needed leeway to press his entire palm against the Yan Jin’s hot flesh. Shen Zhixian sighed comfortably, finally contented. He shifted his head, found a good resting place with his forehead pressed against the slope of Yan Jin’s neck, and slipped back into a deep sleep.

Yan Jin froze. Although Shen Zhixian’s cold hand was pressed against his chest, he didn’t feel the least bit cold. He just felt like there was a ball of fire in his chest.

Burning him like a brand.

He didn’t dare provoke Shen Zhixian any further, fearing that the person would tear all of his clothes apart, regardless of his resistance. Therefore, he could only persevere with a stiff face and allow Shen Zhixian to rest his hand over his chest.

Right over his heart.

When the first light of the sun broke through the horizon, Shen Zhixian’s fever broke and he finally woke up.

It was probably the matter of poison neutralizing poison because the torment caused by the grey serpent resulted in no heart attacks.

Shen Zhixian yawned lazily and opened his eyes. He thought that it would be difficult to endure the night. Who knew that when he woke up, aside from feeling slightly flustered and hungry, he didn’t even feel uncomfortable. His neck was only slightly sore, but it was probably the result of sleeping against a tree all night.

He glanced over at Yan Jin, who was quietly holding his sword beside him, and felt a little relieved.

Very good.

But….

Shen Zhixian frowned and looked at Yan Jin’s oddly messy collar. “What happened?”

Yan Jin’s fingers tightened on his sword. After a moment, he said with some difficulty, “A lynx came in the middle of the night and tore it.”

Shen Zhixian let out a faint “en” and didn't continue to pursue the matter. But, there were still 100,000 disbeliefs in his heart. What lynx would be so clever that he would bypass the outer robe and just pull at the collar of the inner shirt?

This bad disciple probably did something bad at night and just didn’t want him to know.

Shen Zhixian restrained his expression and turned back to leave. He decided that he must come up with a method to curtail Yan Jin of his bad thoughts.

Xixi: The spoken word for lynx/mountain cat (zhi shanmao) pretty much sounds like Zhixian (but without the mao, of course).

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 20

Yan Jin planned really well.

Shilian Mountain was massive. Not only were they transmitted to a random corner on this mountain, they were also stripped of their spiritual force. Let alone five days, even after ten and a half months, no one would be able to find a way out.

This was the third day and they still hadn’t found the tactical spot for the teleportation formation.

Shen Zhixian suggested that since the teleportation formation would activate in the next five days, they merely had to wait it out. It would also save them from wandering around like headless flies. Not to speak of other perils, he still had to contend with possibly getting a heart attack while stuck here.

As a result, Yan Jin silently thought it over and then shook his head.

He hadn’t delved much into the formation method itself. This time, in order to change the teleportation formation, he’d ask Senior Brother Shao from Third Peak for help. As a result, he only learned the fundamentals needed to affect the change...Of course, Senior Brother Shao probably didn’t guess that Yan Jin would be so brave as to put his instructions into practice.

In short, Yan Jin’s formation was actually not changed properly. He could only ensure that Shen Zhixian would teleport to a specific location in the mountain and then be teleported back in five days. If, by some chance, he were to be teleported to a different place...there was no guarantee that that

five days limitations would stay in affect.

The angrier Shen Zhixian got ...the more benevolent he seemed.

He endured his anger and said lightly, “Weren’t you afraid I would teleport out of range and never be able to get out again?”

Yan Jin answered this question without hesitation. “This disciple has faith in Master. Besides, I left behind a letter. Once you read it you wouldn’t walk around.”

Shen Zhixian: “ ... ”

This bad disciple really did accurately guessed his mind. If he really were teleported to that place and saw the letter, his first reaction would be disbelief. He would try to find the formation but, if he couldn’t locate it, he would definitely returned to the same location by the fifth day.

She Zhixian refused to speak to this traitor anymore and took a narrow path. Yan Jin followed behind him, so silent that Shen Zhixian could only hear his quiet footfalls..

As Shen Zhixian walked, he wondered how he should deal with the traitor. If he were too soft, he would repeatedly be made a fool of. If he were too harsh, he wouldn’t be able to defeat him. So, the best way was to simply...

He was so lost in thought that it took him a long time to notice his surroundings. He suddenly realized that the area today was too quiet. Yesterday, he came across a few monsters. But, today, it’d already been more than half a day and he hadn’t even seen a hint of one.

Shen Zhixian vaguely felt that something was wrong. The moment he was about to speak, he heard movements coming from behind him. Turning around, he realized that it was a fat rabbit. It brushed passed them, feet thumping loudly, and suddenly ran into a tree nearby. The collision caused it to flip over and fall to the ground. Then, it simply laid motionless.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He was about to comment and say that this was a silly rabbit when, all of a sudden, the tree the rabbit had ran into suddenly swayed violently. It creaked loudly as a splinter appeared midway on the tree's trunk.

The nearly ten meter tall tree suddenly toppled over onto the ground, stirring up a cloud of dust. Shen Zhixian covered his nose with one hand and retreated a few steps. He watched as the fallen rabbit abruptly jumped up on to the trunk, opened its mouth to expose two massive teeth and began to gnaw at the bark. Within moments, it had gnawed a gradually deepening hole in the trunk.

Shen Zhixian: "...."

That was disturbing.

Shen Zhixian looked at the large, energetic rabbit gnawing away at the tree bark. He wanted to say something but hesitated. Finally, he decided to just take a detour around. At that moment, something suddenly moved.

A gray and black flower rose from the tree bark, it's petals quietly unfurling over a large bowl-shaped center as it slowly crept forward.

The rabbit was so busy that, by the time it saw the flower, it was too late. Before it could even move, the flower shot forward like a snake, it's petals opening wide, and swallowed up the entire rabbit in a single gulp.

The soft but resilient petals closed over the whole rabbit, which struggled fiercely even as it began to die. After a while, the struggles ceased.

The flower petals rippled and shifted for a while before unfurling once more and spitting out a pile of bones that had been picked clean, leaving not a single speck of meat behind.

Having eaten it's fill, the flower was completely sated and its petals shook with satisfaction. After a moment, it shrunk back against the bark, lying in

wait for a new prey. Suddenly, there came a sound of flapping wings. A huge turtledove forward, it’s pointed beak sharp enough to pick up small pebbles.

It’s beak skillfully closed on the flower stem, severing it, and the whole flower was lifted up and carried away.

This chain of predators happened in less than a quarter of an hour.

Shen Zhixian frowned. These demonic beasts were abnormally ferocious. The demonic beasts within Shilian Mountain should only be a little bit fiercer than ordinary animal. Moreover, their habits should also be no different from ordinary beasts.

The tree-eating bunny, flesh-eating flower, and flower-eating turtle...These were demonic beasts that should not have appeared in Shilian Mountain at all!

He subconsciously thought of Yan Jin and wanted to ask him, but then he realized that this couldn't be Yan Jin’s handiwork. Even though Yan Jin was the protagonist, he shouldn’t have been able to transfer in so many weird monsters under the sect’s watchful eyes.

The spirit lock was still in effect, meaning that they still had no spiritual protection. Shen Shixian didn’t want to take any more risks and decided to return back the same way they’d came. After walking for a long time, they ended up inadvertently circling around and returning to the same spot they were at before.

The fallen tree lay silently in front of them, signalling their failure.

The two looked at each other, and Shen Zhixian asked, “Keep going?”

Yan Jin didn’t say anything, but his hand tightened on his sword.

The new path was not so easy to traverse. More strange demonic beasts appeared one after another. There were not only more of the same types of

rabbits, flowers, and turtledoves that they'd seen previously, but also many strange demonic beasts. Shen Zhixian was able to recognize some of these strange beasts but not all of them.

Yan Jin was very guarded. His sword was half-sheathed, ready to strike at any time. But, what was the most strange was that these demonic beasts clearly recognized them as food. Yet, the moment they approached, these same beasts would suddenly panic, before wheeling around and running away.

If was as if the beasts gone senseless with fear, so much so that they could only run slowly, acting like they would otherwise be eaten on the spot.

Shen Zhixian shot Yan Jin a disbelieving look. Could this be the power of the protagonist's halo? The kind that came pre-installed with a golden finger that made any demonic beasts who see him run away in fear?

Yan Jin noticed his gazed and looked right back at him. Why did he feel that these demonic beasts were afraid of his master?

Several times, the demonic beasts were ready to meet with his sword. But, as soon as Shen Zhixian turned and looked over, those same monsters would instantly freeze, then quickly run away

The master and disciple looked at each other, and each felt as if his guess was right.

The demonic beasts all ran away. Although they didn't know why, they were still glad since it meant less trouble and less danger. After another half an hour, the trees became sparse. Shen Zhixian squinted and look ahead some distance away. He murmured, "There's an open space."

The open space didn't look small at all.

The closer he got to the open space, the more Shen Zhixian frowned. Everything that fell into his eyes seemed to elicit a sense of deja vu.

Had he been here before?

He stood in front of the open space, searching his memory but found nothing. As he was thinking about it, he suddenly caught a flash from the corner of his eyes.

Shen Zhixian turned his gaze fully to the direction of the flash and realized that it was a hazy figure, which stood not too far away, looking at him quietly.

The moment he saw the face clearly, Shen Zhixian’s expression displayed a look of wonder. He instinctively took a few steps forward, looking at the figure in shock.

The moment he stepped forward, the surrounding air suddenly fluctuated, indicating that something had been activated.

Yan Jin noticed this unusual change and, within a heartbeat, hurried forward to follow Shen Zhixian. But, he immediately found that an invisible barrier had silently risen up.

It was exactly between him and Shen Zhixian.

…...

Shen Zhixian didn’t notice the change behind him. He stared at the hazy figure in front of him. It was a handsome, middle-aged man dressed in a moon white long robe with a sword hung by his waist. He had one hand resting over the open space. As he looked at Shen Zhixian, his lips stretched into a smile.

There was so much affection in his eyes.

This face was exactly the same as his master...the face of the former sect leader.

Shen Zhixian tentatively called out, “Master.” He looked closely at the

figure, thinking that the former sect leader had died long ago due to qi deviation. But, why was he suddenly in front of him?

The figure stayed motionless and even the smile on his face remained the same, like a carefully designed scroll painting. Although the image was vivid, it lacked vitality.

Shen Zhixian looked back over his shoulder and found that the place where Yan Jin was supposed to be standing was empty. His brows furrowed and rationality told him he shouldn't take risks alone. But, an invisible force seemed to compel him to step forward.

There was an oddly shaped, incandescent white object half-buried in the pile of dirt, attract his attention.

Before he could stop himself, Shen Zhixian bent down to pick up the object, weighing it in his hand. This was actually a large piece of spiritual jade… No, not just one piece. Many pieces.

Countless pieces of finger-sized spirit jades were carved into various shapes, which laid entangled like a Luban Lock.

Shen Zhixian used to love playing with this kind of small toy. He'd even spent some time researching the skills. At this time, he simply turned the toy around in his hand. Suddenly, his ten fingers flew into action, rapidly flipping and disassembling the pieces.

This Luban Lock was more refined and detailed than the ones he'd solved before. As a result, the solution was slightly different from the general, though it was still similar to the solution he'd worked out before.

In the end, a weird sense of familiarity took over. When the last two spirit jades were finally separated, all of the spirit jades disintegrated and drifted down his fingers like ash.

The only thing that was left behind was a finger-sized turquoise jade lying quietly within the palm of his hand. It was heavy and was covered with a

glossy sheen. Shen Zhixian looked at it thoughtfully. The turquoise jade suddenly scattered into a brilliant ray of light and shot toward to hazy man before him.

The motionless figure suddenly moved.

The wind blew through and shook his wide sleeves. His face softened, and the whole person gradually became full of energy. He nodded slightly at Shen Zhixian. “You’re back.”

Shen Zhixian looked at him in surprise but did not speak.

The figure didn’t seem to care about his reaction. In other words, this was simply an illusion that had been laid a long time ago. Every move was carried out step by step and would not spontaneously change just because of external reactions.

Still smiling, he said, “I know this thing could only be unlocked by you.” His voice was kind and gentle, intermixed with relief and nostalgia. “Sui Jian, you’re back, right?”

Sui Jian.

The name slammed into Shen Zhixian’s heart like thunder, blasting him into a trance.

He couldn’t help but take another step forward. His voice was slightly shaky as he said, “You...just now, were you calling me? You--You’re calling me?”

The figure ignored his words, sighed, and continued, “The me you see today is just a phantom. The grandmaster from Xuanji Pavilion helped me set this divinatory diagram up. There’s no escaping from fate. At this moment, I don’t know what my circumstances are and also whether, my disciple Sui Jian is safe and well. I merely have something to say that Sui Jian should bear in mind.”

Shen Zhixian held his breath subconsciously.

The figure slowly said, “It should be yours so you should not yield. You must take responsibility for it and must not renounce it.”

Shen Zhixian was shaken and dazed. He seemed to hear a young voice in his ear, full of heroic passion and grand aspirations, brimming with the reckless, ostentatious vigor of youth, saying, “As long as there’s me, Qingyun Sect would never decline. Master, you can rest assured and retire in peace.”

But things had changed with the passage of time. Someone had died from qi deviation, and someone else’s grand aspiration had long ago drained away.

Shen Zhixian’s mood was complicated. A sourness permeated his heart, making him uncomfortable. In the wind, he heard his own voice, muttering, “I’m back…”

Who was talking and who was back?

Was it him, or was it the original “Shen Zhixian”? Or, was it the “Sui Jian” that the figure was talking about?

Shen Zhixian only felt that his thoughts were chaotic. Complex emotions and rough memory fragments filled his head and entangled like a mass of weeds, making him unable to think. The figure’s gentle and heavy voice entered his ears.

“....Song Ming is a good child. It’s a pity that his cultivation is insufficient. He can only stay at his current level for a while but can go no further. I told him before that once you come back and use the token as evidence, he needs to return the position of sect leader to you. And, here you are.”

“I wish you good health and a smooth life. Take Qingyun Sect to the top, but don’t feel restrained by it. Take time to explore the gaps between the heavens and earth.”

The figure began to blur and a shimmer of light flickered around him like fireflies before scattering in the wind. The old person's voice gradually faded, along with his kind smile. Shen Zhixian suddenly felt a sharp pain in his heart as it surged uncontrollably with grief, causing his eyes to sour. From the corners of his eyes, tears fell.

He was obviously just an outsider. He had no idea what kind of chance had allowed him to attain this body. Now matter how good the former sect leader was to "Shen Zhixian," it was ultimately a matter only between the former sect leader and the original owner.

Was this the instinctual emotion that belonged to the original owner…?

Shen Zhixian urgently gasped for breath, finding it difficult to restrain this sour sadness that suffused him. His knees gave out abruptly and he fell onto the gravel, not caring that the small pebbles had broken the skin of his knees and were making him bleed.

"Goodbye, my disciple Sui Jian."

In the breezy wind, the barrier shattered and the figure dissipated. His final sigh drifted away with the wind.

Only a few words were blown by the wind to Yan Jin.

The barrier that had blocked him suddenly disappeared. Yan Jin had no time to see what was happening with Shen Zhixian before he heard that name. His expression instantly became shocked and he looked in disbelief at Shen Zhixian.

Who was Shen Zhixian talking to? Who was calling Sui Jian? Was was it...that called Sui Jian?

When he was caught be hehind the barrier, he could only watch as Shen Zhixian talked to a vague figure. But, he couldn't hear his words. It was only when the barrier was broken that he heard just enough to affect his mind.

Numerous questions arose in his mind. He should have asked what had happened within this short time span, but timidity nailed his footsteps in place.

He stood stiffly for a long time before he finally approached, his mannerism returning to the calmness that had grown out of hardship, steady like the foundation of a mountain that had met countless winds and rain.

“Master…” He said in a low voice. But, Shen Zhixian did not respond, as if he hadn’t even heard Yan Jin’s approach.

From Yan Jin’s point of view, he could only see that Shen Zhixian’s well-shaped lips were trembling slightly. Not knowing what to say, Yan Jin knelt down beside him and heard the murmur that was so soft, it was almost breathless.

“...The third wish is to climb that bridge and joyfully see each other year after year.”

The surrounding scenes suddenly twisted, and spiritual energies fluctuated as the long and silent teleportation formation was finally re-activated.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 21

“Hot, thinly sliced beef and a flask of wine, coming!”

“One plate of meat-stuffed steam buns! One plate of sweet cake! Coming up, one bowl of beef noodle soup!!

“Little brother, may I trouble you with one bowl of plum blossom soup…?”

All kinds of voices interlaced. It was a frigid winter morning and the wind blew cold and chilly. When people talk, the cold coagulated their warm breaths into white mists, so thick that it practically blurred out each person's face.

A five or six-year-old boy was curled up on a street corner. He was wearing a thin, ragged shirt, a pair of dirty shoes so worn out that, when stepped on the snow, they did not warm his feet at all.

The trousers were already too small for the body, exposing half of his lower legs, which were frozen red by the cold. The little boy didn’t seem to care. He merely opened his eyes to peek around.

His face was filthy, and only his pair of penetratingly dark eyes were clear and bright.

A middle-aged man bought three big steamed buns and a bowl of noodle soup. After a while, he could not eat anymore and left behind half a steam bun and a bite of soup.

The little boy stared as if he'd found a treasure. When the middle-aged man left, he quickly rushed out of the corner. One hand skillfully grabbed the steamed bun while the other took hold of the bowl and brought it up to his mouth.

His actions were very quick but others still saw and were disgusted by him. Just as his mouth touched the cold bowl, and before he could even drank down the contents, a severe slap fell down, overturning the contents in the bowl.

The soup spilled on him. The chilly wind immediately plastered the cold, wet shirt against his body.

"Where did this filthy thing come from?! Get away!"

The strong, muscular man scolded him with a grin, and the malice and disgust in his voice took substance, piercing the boy like a knife.

The boy clutched the remaining half of the steamed bun in silence, squeezing his little hands into fists, and turned away silently.

The brawny man blinked, saw the steamed bun, and angrily rebuked, "Dirty thing, what do you have in your hand?! A big steamed bun costs a copper. You dare get it for nothing?"

There was obviously only a tiny piece left.

The boy pumped his legs, intent on escaping. But, when the man saw that he was running away, he immediately took big strides to catch up, pulling on the boy's collar. He'd been having some troubles lately, and he'd longed want to bully someone to let out steam.

The boy was already emaciated, and his body was frozen stiff. Within two steps, he was caught and fell to the ground.

When that dark and ferocious hand was about to drag the boy back by his collar, a fair hand stretched out gracefully, fingers wrapping around the

man’s thick wrist.

The slender fingers that easily gripped the man’s wrist looked weak but the man felt as if his wrist was being pinched by iron tongs. He could not move at all.

As the most difficult man to deal with on this street, the man had never been offended so boldly before.

He flushed with anger and turned his head to see which daring and ignorant child had dared pluck a hair from the tiger’s head. As a result, when he turned his head, he caught sight of a noble-looking young man dressed in a long, white robe. The young man smiled and casually flung the man’s wrist away from the boy.

The man’s entire hand immediately became numb, and he could no longer lift it. His face twisted, knowing that he’d encountered a ruthless character. He gnashed his teeth and purposefully caused a spectacle, shouting, “Who are you?! Report your name!”

The young man in white glanced at the man lazily. His temper was quite good and so his smile had not diminished. He replied with one sentence, “It’s not known in the Jianghu and not worth mentioning.”

The man still wanted to argue back, but in the next moment, he felt his entire body go numb. One moment he was standing and, in the next, he’d fallen with a thump into the ground. His tongue began to swell so that his mouth could only make unintelligible noises.

Although there were two to three people eating close by, none helped him. This man was famous for acting unruly on the street, and no one wanted to mess with him.

The young man in white ignored the man. He turned around and reached the little boy in a few steps. Reaching out to him, he said, “Can you stand?”

The little boy looked down at his dirty hands and said nothing.

The young man in white laughed. It was unclear how he did it but, with a shake of his wrists, he suddenly held a light gray cloak with a soft and fluffy collar.

He stretched out his hand and wrapped the cloak around the little boy.

The fluff around the neck covered most of the boy's face but he still heard someone whispered, “Ah, it’s an immortal cultivator.”

An immortal cultivator.

What's that?

As he chewed blankly on those strange words, he realized that his body was suddenly lifted into the air. He began to subconsciously struggled, until his back was patted lightly and a soft and gentle voice sounded in his ear. “Don’t move.”

The young man in white held his malnourished body with one hand and found that he weighed as light as a feather, as if the body underneath the cloak was all bones and barely any meat.

The little boy stiffened, his lips pressed tightly together without uttering a single word.

This pose brought him very close to the young man. When he raised his eyes, he saw the young man’s exquisite profile and jade-like earlobe. His skin was fair and tender. One glance was enough to tell that he was a noble used to living like a prince.

The boy’s stomach suddenly growled. After such a long time without food, the stomach was beginning to protest. For a split second, he held his breath, so ashamed he wanted to dig a hole and climbed in.

The young man in white also heard this sound. Feeling that the boy was too pitiful, he quickly carried the boy to a breakfast shop, selected a seat away

from the wind, and neatly sat down to order a pile of food.

It’ll take time for the food to be delivered. In the meantime, the young man unexpectedly pulled out a white handkerchief and asked the shop owner for a bowl of hot water. Then, he soaked the handkerchief in the water and gently and meticulously wiped the small face clean.

After cleaning the boy’s face and hands, the young man snapped his fingers and applied a little trick. An ordinary person can’t use spiritual force, but he had no choice but to use spiritual force to condense a small, white cloud-like ball for the boy to hold and keep his hands warm.

The food was quickly brought in. Thick, meaty rice porridge, a plate of small meat buns just out of the basket, white steamed buns, and a plate of stir-fried with vegetables and pork.

They were all very common food, which the boy had seen countless times and had lingered over day by day.

The steam that rose from the hot food drifted in front of the boy, and he asked quietly, “What’s your name?”

…….

“Zhixian? Zhixian!” His roommate’s bright and cheerful voice suddenly sounded, seeming very excited. “Your dubbing won an award! The business person wanted to know which name you wanted to use. Do you want to use your real name?

“Ah?” The just awakened Shen Zhixian opened his eyes in bewilderment, still half asleep. It took him a while to react to his roommate’s question. “What name?”

The roommate hated iron for not becoming steel. “The dubbing you submitted won first prize. The organizer wanted to announce the winning information and asked if you want him to put your real name or use a stage name?”

Shen Zhizian yawned and finally remembered what was going on.

Still tired, he turned his head and completely buried himself under the comforter. He turned off the Bluetooth headset that had been playing all night and slid it from his neck. Before he turned it off completely, the last sentence of the single that had been playing on loop was:

“....My third wish is to be like a pair of swallows, meeting year after year.”

Slow and charming.

A muffled voice came from the rolled up comforter, “My stage name. Just call it Sui Jian, okay? Year after year, meeting after meeting--Give them a reply for me. I still need to sleep some more…”

……..

Such messy things, these chaotic, fragmented memories.

At the end of the dream, there was an endlessly deep and dark sea. He was swallowed up in it, unable to move, barely able to breathe.

When Shen Zhixian woke up, for a moment, he couldn’t tell where he was. His eyes were bewildered and his vision hazy.

Every breath brought a sharp pain in his chest. His whole body ached, as if it had been dismantled and reorganized. He gasped slightly, enduring the pain, as he slowly focused his gaze on the figure in front of him.

It was Fourth Elder.

“Fourth Martial Uncle…” Speaking was painful. Even his voice sounded hoarse and unpleasant, like two pieces of sandpaper rubbing against each other.

The taste of rust bubbled up his throat. His face paled, and he tried to

endure but, in the end, couldn’t help but cough. The cough affected the chest, which made his heart hurt once again, as if someone had hollowed out his heart.

Fourth Elder was very distressed. He helped Shen Zhixian sit up and patted his back. Then, without turning his head, he told the person standing next to him, “Go and get the elixir.”

A glass of warm liquid was quickly brought over. Fourth Elder took it and carefully fed it to Shen Zhixian.

The elixir slid down Shen Zhixian’s throat. The abundant spiritual qi washed over the heart veins that had been battered with mottled scars. He took a long breath and finally felt that he was alive.

Seeing that the difficulty had passed, Fourth Elder was relieved and couldn’t help chiding, “Why did you suddenly get sick again? When Yan Jin came to me with a white face, he scared me half to death...I already told this child to refuse the request. Why did you have to go and try Shilian Mountain yourself?

Shen Zhixian heard Yan Jin’s name and raised his eyes slightly. He saw Yan Jin standing like a stone statue behind Fourth Elder, his eyes red-rimmed and his face exhausted, as if he hadn’t slept for a long time.

His clothes were crumpled and dirty, the collar still disheveled; it was clear that he still hadn’t changed his clothes yet. A pair of dark eyes gazed intently at Shen Zhixian, and when Shen Zhixian turned to look at him, his eyes noticeably brightened.

He unexpectedly cut quite a sorry figure.

An idea struck and Shen Zhixian turned it over in his mind.

He slowly retracted his gaze, having no intention of talking to Yan Jin and pretending not to see that Yan Jin’s eyes had momentarily dimmed. He slowly sighed, before giving Fourth Elder a soothing smile. He quietly said,

“It’s alright. Lately, I’ve been a lazy slacker. Besides, I’m afraid Song Ming might get angry.”

Fourth Elder said unhappily, “If he’s angry then he can go himself. He hasn’t been angry in a while. Anger will be beneficial for his health.” Then, he returned to the original subject, not allowing Shen Zhixian to change the topic. “What’s going on? How did the heart attack happen?”

Fourth Elder glanced at Yan Jin and joked, “Did this kid here make you angry?”

For the past few years, Fourth Elder have had frequent interactions with Fifth Peak and would often witness the interactions between Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. Seeing that the relationship between them was very good, he’d even mentioned to Third Elder that he was glad Shen Zhixian had at least one good disciple to rely on.

He knew that Shen Zhixian tightly guarded his disciple. Wanting to add a little levity to Shen Zhixian, he’d joked about Yan Jin to provoke Shen Zhixian into righteously refuting it. But, who knew that Shen Zhixian would be momentarily silent before saying in a quiet voice, “No.”

Fourth Elder immediately noticed that something was wrong. He wanted to ask again, but Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows and put on a tired expression. “It’s my problem and shouldn’t concern A’jin. I’ve troubled Fourth Martial Uncle again and made you ran all this way…”

With this, he made it clear that he didn’t want to say any more about the subject. Fourth Elder turned to look at Yan Jin, but this child was also uncommunicative.

Fourth Elder frowned, knowing that something must have happened between the two. However, he was not the type of elders who enjoyed meddling in other people’s business. He hesitated for a moment. In the end, he took Shen Zhixian’s pulse, ensuring that he was no longer in danger, and pressed down on the worry in his heart to order, “Rest more and take your

medicine on time.”

Shen Zhixian was grateful. He nodded at him and thanked him again. Fourth Elder patted the back of his hand and said, “Why are you being so polite? If you’re uncomfortable, immediately send someone to find your martial uncle.”

After saying this to Shen Zhixian, he turned his head toward Yan Jin and instructed, “Your Master has a hard time taking medicine. You’ll have to watch him. Don’t let him sneak it away.”

Yan Jin nodded, without his usual calmness. Seeing that Fourth Elder was about to leave, he hesitated for a moment before chasing after him a few steps. He whispered, “Fourth Elder, master, he….”

Fourth Elder’s hand was resting on the door panel, just about to leave. After hearing Yan Jin’s words, he turned to look at the young man and, seeing that his face was genuinely worried, told him, “Your master is now like a porcelain doll. You have to coax him and take care not to make him angry.”

Yan Jin murmured an indistinct yes and stood there lost in thought until Fourth Elders suddenly pushed the door open, allowing a gust of wind inside. It was only after the door had closed that he suddenly regained his senses. He took two to three large strides back to the bedside.

Xixi: So tired, I could barely keep my eyes open. So, for now, this chapter is currently unedited.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 22

Shen Zhixian leaned back on the bed, eyes closed, as if he’d fallen asleep.

His face was as white as a sheet of paper, and the tear-mole in the corner of his eyes was particularly red. Due to coughing too much, his collar was disheveled, exposing a section of collarbone, exquisitely curved and white as porcelain.

The whole person looked like a tired and sickly beauty.

Yan Jin stood beside the bed, not daring to alarm him even for a moment.

A plain white wrist hanging on the bedside moved, and the jade strings that was wrapped around the wrist made a slight noise, causing Yan Jin to look at it subconsciously.

Shen Zhixian was naturally slender, but after a few days of illness, he’d lost a lot of weight. The jade string wounded around his wrist had loosened. It slid down the back of his hand, exposing the little section of skin that was originally covered by the jade string.

A small dark scar immediately caught Yan Jin's attention.

…What was that?

Shen Zhixuan had injured his wrist before? Did he purposefully wear the string of jade beads to hide it?

The exposed scar looked faintly irregular, the angle and shape clearly

indicating that it was not a sword nor a knife wound. Yan Jin didn’t know how Shen Zhixian got hurt. He glanced back at the scar once and then looked away. He returned his focus to kneeling on the bed with one knee, and quietly staring at Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian finally opened his eyes, looked down wearily, and inadvertently met Yan Jin’s gaze directly.

"..."

"..."

The two people were silent for a moment. Shen Zhixian sighed first and asked, "Have the people at Third Peak visited Shilian Mountain yet?"

It took Yan Jin a moment to respond, even though he understood the meaning behind Shen Zhixian’s words.

His altered formation on Shilian Mountain hadn’t been restored. Since he hadn’t been able to return yet... Third Peak was good at formation. If they discovered any clues and delved deeper ...

Master had just woken up and was now already thinking about this?

Yan Jin became worried and didn’t respond. Shen Zhixian saw that he was anxious and tried to soothe him, “Don’t worry. If they ask, just tell them I did it idly for fun. It’s not a big deal, and Third Peak’s people most likely won’t make me loose face over this.”

He’d said so much within such a short time frame that he became a little breathless. He coughed slightly and tried to suppress the itch in his throat.

This time his heart ailment was really a bit severe, even worse than the previous time in the hot spring. He’d woken up for so long, and he still felt

uncomfortable even now.

If it hadn’t been because he wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to guilt trip Yan Jin, he would have been sleeping tightly under the comforter by now.

Yan Jin became nervous as soon as he heard the cough. He stood up to pour a cup of medicine for him.

Shen Zhixian just drank the elixir and didn't want to drink it anymore. He waved his hands weakly, frowned and coughed twice before he tiredly said, "I don't want to drink. I'm fine. Go and rest."

He purposefully didn't mention Yan Jin's calculations on Shilian Mountain. Aside from stating that he’ll shoulder the responsibility of changing the formation, he'd said nothing more.

Yan Jin felt as if a needle had passed through his thick heart's wall and fiercely pierced the soft heart within. He couldn’t see the wound but only felt the deep pain of it.

For a moment, he felt completely ashamed facing Shen Zhixian.

The phantom that Shen Zhixian saw in the open space must be someone who was important to him. Yan Jin didn't know what they had talked about to cause Shen Zhixian’s emotions to become so chaotic…. This, combined with the trouble caused by the teleportation formation, had aggravated the heart injury to resurface worse than before.

The culprit was him.

Had it not been for him, who had calculated against Shen Zhixian and caused him to be teleported to an unknown location, Shen Zhixian would not have encountered so many things that caused him such anxiety.

Yesterday, Fourth Elder even heaved a sigh, saying that Shen Zhixian almost hadn’t survived. Since the incident at the hot spring, Shen Zhixian's

body had not been very good. Usually, he would get better after taking medicine but now it didn’t seem to make much difference. Therefore, the events in the past few days had been terrible.

But, when Master finally awakened, not only did he not blame him, he’d maintained the front with Fourth Elder, acting as if all was normal, and even took responsibility for Yan Jin's actions.

In these past few days, Yan Jin was full of regret and shame. The memory of Shen Zhixian’s blood-stained lips cycled over and over in his mind.

After they had teleported back, Shen Zhixian lost consciousness and couldn’t stop vomiting blood. His hands and feet turned ice-cold. Yan Jin utterly lost his calm. He frantically carried Shen Zhixian and staggered as fast as he could toward Fourth Peak.

In his panic, he’d forgotten that his spiritual force had recovered and, instead, ran there on his own two legs

Fortunately, he met Fourth Elder halfway there. Fourth Elder saw that the situation wasn’t good and quickly took these two sorry-looking people back to Fifth Peak. Luckily, after some critical care treatment, he’d managed to pull Shen Zhixian back from the brink of death.

Shen Zhixian remained unconscious. The longer Fourth Elder stayed at Fifth Peak, the more suspicious he became. However, after Shen Zhixian’s condition became slightly more stable, he left and only returned to quietly check-in on the patient from time to time.

Because Shen Zhixian had no other reliable people he was close to, Yan Jin stayed behind to care for him and hadn’t been able to close his eyes for three days.

But, no matter how regretful and guilty he felt, he couldn’t make up for Shen Zhixian’s injuries.

“Master…” he said in a rough voice, “I’m sorry…”

--Huh??

--Aiya, listen, what did he just say?!

Shen Zhixian was really tired. His eyes were half-closed and his brain was muddled with the need for sleep. Just as he was about to fall asleep, he was suddenly awakened by this sentence.

What did he just hear?!

Yan Jin just said sorry to him!

In that instant, Shen Zhixian became completely awake, feeling as if the pain in his chest had been alleviated by a lot. He really wished he could give Yan Jin a big knock on the head with his knuckle to express his happiness.

When he'd woken up, half of the discomforts he'd expressed had been real while the other half was deliberate. Anyway, Fourth Elder's medicine truly tasted terrible so his reaction wasn't completely false.

He'd deliberately exaggerated his discomfort to gauge whether Yan Jin would feel guilty. If he felt guilty, it meant that Yan Jin's desire to kill him wasn't so serious that it couldn't be changed. If Yan Jin did not care….

Then, Shen Zhixian would have to quickly prepare his escape and hide away for a long time.

But, the result was more than he'd expected.

He thought that Yan Jin would only be silent and well-behaved for a while, but did not expect that he would directly apologize.

Immediately, Shen Zhixian felt the sweet rush of gratification and wanted to create an even better trick with Yan Jin. He eagerly tried to spit two mouthfuls of blood to bluff Yan Jin and see if he would panic and scream,

“Master, don’t you die!”

….The idea was beautiful, but it was not easy to implement.

Because, suddenly, Shen Zhixian was very tired, so incredibly tired, tired to the point of pain. He just wanted to close his eyes and go to sleep immediately. He no longer had the energy to mess with his disciple and so he could only reluctantly and temporarily give up this little bit of naughty fun.

With a sigh, he tiredly patted Yan Jin’s hand resting on the bed. He said helplessly, “It’s okay. Go and rest.”

"Master ..."

The more forgiving Shen Zhixuan was, the deeper Yan Jin’s guilt burrowed in his heart. This guilt roiled in layers of waves, overwhelming him.

The back of his hand was patted twice, and the cold touch reminded him of that first night in the mountain, when Shen Zhixian leaned into his arms and fell asleep without precaution, his hand resting on Yan Jin’s chest.

Master had trusted Yan Jin to take care of him. In fact, he’d made every effort to care for Yan Jin and had treated him so well…

But, he’d failed the Master’s trust and even used that trust to scheme against him, which in turn caused him to become so severely wounded.

Shen Zhixian was unable to resist his lethargy any longer. He closed his eyes and immediately fell asleep. Yan Jin got up to hold him and laid his body flat on the bed. He pulled the comforter over him and stared at him for a long time before finally quietly leaving.

When Yan Jin stepped out of the house, a worried Xiao Caoya, who’d been waiting outside for a long time, immediately flew over and climbed up to his shoulder.

At first, Yan Jin was afraid that the little grass bud might be too noisy and make a fuss over Shen Zhixian. He wouldn’t let it enter the house and left it to play outside all by itself.

Xiao Caoya also knew how serious the matter was, but it couldn’t control its own passion and liveliness. Therefore, it could only grumble its grievances outside as it watched for Shen Zhixian to wake up.

After waiting so long for Yan Jin to come out, it immediately looked at Yan Jin’s expression, trying to guess Shen Zhixian’s current situation.

Yan Jin looked calm and walked out step by step. After the panic of the past few days, he’d finally restored his usual calmness.

Xiao Caoya thought that everything must be all right. It was about to pump up its leaves to cheer a few times when Yan Jin took a step, suddenly covered his chest, and groaned.

Black blood splattered onto the ground.

Yan Jin stared at the black blood on the ground with deep eyes that held no emotional fluctuations at all.

There was a voice in his head screaming wildly. His hands clenched into fists, using every effort to endure. He used so much strength that the back of his hands began to bulge with blue tendons.

Abruptly, he took in a deep breath and reached behind his back to pull out his sword. In these past few days, he’d kept vigil at Shen Zhixian’s side. The sword that had never left him was thrown in a corner, where it gathered dust until he’d picked it up just now before leaving Shen Zhixian’s room.

The sword ray was cold and ruthlessly tyrannical, splitting the table made of white jade not far away in half.

As the table collapsed on both sides, Yan Jin fell heavily to one knee, using the sword to keep himself upright. He panted sharply.

Another mouthful of black blood sprayed out, some landing on the blade and slid down drop by drop.

Xiao Caoya stared, completely stupefied.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 23.1

Shen Zhixian was very angry these days.

The white jade table he liked very much, he didn’t know which bastard had chopped it in half. The cut was clean and smooth, and at first glance, it looked very much like the result of a sword ray attack. Now, the table looked pitiful and helpless.

Angrily, Shen Zhixian painstakingly analyzed the situation and felt that the only person who would have the courage to come up here and dare draw his sword…

Could only be that villainous disciple Yan Jin.

Xiao Caoya saw his angry expression. Its two leaves trembled as it pretended to hold a sword, imitated Yan Jin’s posture that day, slashed, and then collapsed, as if it’d received a wound. It stimulated a blood-spraying sound, “Pucha!”

Shen Zhixian was slightly distracted by it. Flipping the small grass bud pretending to be wounded, he said, "What are you doing? "

Xiao Caoya saw that it had successfully attracted Shen Zhixian’s attention. Its energy was immediately revived, and it began performing once again, acting out: swish—puff—collapse.

Shen Zhixian understood its meaning and his eyebrows slightly knitted, feeling a little hesitant.

After Yan Jin split his white jade table in half, he vomited blood?

What happened? Was Yan Jin also injured?

Shen Zhixian was so deep in thought that he forgot that the elixir in his hand was incredibly bitter. He poured it down his throat all at once. His face suddenly changed, and his head pounded, making his brain ache and stars swam before his eyes. He momentarily forgot what he'd been thinking about.

At this moment, a light knock sounded at the door and Yan Jin called from outside, "Master."

Shen Zhixian swallowed the last bit of the elixir and tried his utmost to calm down before deliberately lowering his voice to call out, "Come in."

When Yan Jin came in, he saw his fragile master slightly leaning on the soft bed, a thin comforter halfway down his hips and a scroll in his hand. He faintly looked over.

"These days, A'jin continuously behaved like a master. That jade table, was it necessary to split it just because you're unhappy with it?"

Yan Jin froze for a moment before finally reacting. He pressed his lips together and whispered, "The disciple will leave at once…"

He spoke too softly during the second half of the sentence and Shen Zhixian couldn't hear it clearly. As he was about to ask, Yan Jin had already placed a plate of Shen Zhixian's favorite fruit on the table nearby and silently left.

Shen Zhixian placed the scroll on the couch and looked at the plate of fruit, frowning and thinking about the second half of the sentence.

Finally, he realized that Yan Jin's quick departure was to try to compensate him.

Yan Jin's action was very fast. Just a few days later, a new white jade table appeared in the yard. In addition to the table, Yan Jin also bought a warm jade soft bed, positioned just next to the stone table and under the big tree. Very convenient for Shen Zhixuan to rest and drink tea.

Shen Zhixian quietly looked into the financial affairs of Fifth Peak. Upon asking, he realized that Yan Jin had bought these items with all the spiritual stones he'd saved in recent years. In addition to Yan Jin's monthly allowance, Shen Zhixian would allocate a lot of pocket money to him. Yan Jin actually didn't use much and left them sitting in the accounts. Until now.

Although the quality was not the best, it was already the best thing Yan Jin could get.

When Shen Zhixian knew about this, he sighed leisurely, then lay down on the soft couch with peace of mind, rolled himself up in the comforter, and fell asleep under the warm sun.

Yan Jin was normally introverted and quiet, but he was generally unexpectedly observant enough to understand other people's preferences. As a result, these things were arranged with the best intentions.

This afternoon, the sun was warm and cozy, making it perfect for people to doze under its warm rays.

Fourth Elder urged Shen Zhixian not to work anymore and to rest in peace. Therefore, Shen Zhixian had no choice but to send a message outside to announce his intention to go into seclusion.

In fact, Shen Zhixian was now lazy as a salted fish every day. His latest favorite hobby was to rest on the soft jade bed that Yan Jin had especially bought for him and would often lay there for most of the day. When he awakened, he would read until he grew tired. Then, while still holding the scroll in his hand, he would pull up the comforter a little and fall asleep.

As he began to doze, his grip on the scroll gradually loosened until it slipped out of his hand completely. Before the scroll hit the ground, it was

easily caught by a strong knuckled hand and carefully placed on the jade table.

Shen Shixian was only half asleep. He knew Yan Jin was near and, coincidentally, he was thirsty. Without opening his eyes, he called him, “A’jin, water…”

Yan Jin obediently poured water for him, helped him sit up, and placed the cup of water against his lips. Sen Zhixian took a sip without any precaution and, suddenly, the whole person jerked awake with complete soberness. “This isn’t water. I want water, not this.”

The disciple was unmoved: "Fourth Elder said you should drink this every day."

Shen Zhixian took a deep breath, wanting to knocking the cup away. Thinking about the sick and weak appearance he’d been cultivating, he held back the desire, lifted his hand up halfway, extended a finger, and a lazily pushed Yan Jin’s hand away, all the while, pretending to be weak. “Don’t want to drink.”

Yan Jin didn’t force him. He set the cup down, helped him get comfortable on the soft bed, and hesitated for a moment before saying, “Master, that day…”

Not again.

As soon as he heard this opening, Shen Zhixian immediately knew what was coming: Yan Jin wanted to know who he saw that day and what that person said.

Considering Yan Jin’s indifferent temperament, it was strange that he would care so much about what happened this time. They’d gone over this repeatedly for many days now and, each time, Shen Zhixian had quietly lead the topic away.

In truth, it wasn’t really a big deal to tell Yan Jin that the figure was the

former sect leader. The problem lay in what the figure had said. The amount of information was too great, and even Shen Zhixian himself still needed to process and figure it out. He still didn’t want to tell anyone else, not even Yan Jin.

It was clear that, despite the original “Shen Zhixian’s” heart injury, the former sect leader’s most important person was still the original. Even the matter of supporting Song Ming as the new sect leader was but a temporary measure. The former sect leader wanted Song Ming to return the position back to the original as soon as his body and mind became better.

However, Song Ming...

Shen Zhixian lowered his eyes, 99% certain that Song Ming would be most unwilling to do so. He’d never mentioned the matter of the token to Shen Zhixian.

According to memory, the original “Shen Zhixian” didn't even know about the token, much less that there was such an agreement between the former sect leader and Song Ming.

It was very strange. It was such an important matter, but why didn’t the former sect leader say anything about it to the original?

What was even more odd was the original person himself.

Since that day at the mountain, he’d gained more memories.

From what he could make sense from the chaotic and fragmented memories, Shen Zhixian realized that the original owner actually had a little name called Sui Jian, just exactly like his stage name before he transmigrated. However, this name seemed to be used only when the original owner went out for training. Few people in the sect knew about it, not even Song Ming.

It was too coincidental!

Shen Zhixian suppressed the weird feeling at the bottom of his heart and continued to ponder.

The original owner used to be a capable and high-spirited individual. But, his heart injury seemed to be a setback that resulted in his total collapse. Not only did his cultivation suffer, his temperament also became weird, turning him gloomy and unpredictable.

It was not completely hopeless. Therefore, how can it suddenly turn a cheerful, open and honest young man turn into someone like this?

Shen Zhixian was lost in thought for a long time.

Yan Jin was anxious, not only worried that Shen Zhixian would not answer him but also that the result would not be what he wanted.

Fortunately, after Shen Zhixian snapped out of his thoughts, he sensed that Yan Jin was truly anxious. He quietly muttered resolutely to himself for a moment and decided to reveal a little bit. It can be considered as appeasing Yan Jin. “That figure, did you see it?”

Yan Jin brightened and immediately replied, “The person I saw is…”

“He was Ancestor Wen, the sect leader before Song Ming.”

Yan Jin looked distracted for a moment and finally said, “And also...your master?”

Shen Zhixian nodded and decided to leave matters here and no say any more.

Yan Jin managed to get him to loosen his mouth with great difficulty. Naturally, he immediately asked, “Ancestor Wen...what did he say to you? Did he...mention anyone?”

His usually calm expression became somewhat hurried and urgent, his unblinking gaze on Shen Zhixian full of intense concentration.

Under his burning gaze, Shen Zhixian’s mind went blank for a moment. He almost spoke out everything in accordance with the other party’s intentions. However, when he opened his mouth to speak, he suddenly regained his senses. Raising his hand, he touched his nose as if nothing had happened and said, “Just some gossip. It’s not important.”

As soon as his voice fell, Yan Jin interrupted hurriedly, "No. I’m sure it’s not."

He rarely had such an anxious expression, although he calmed down after an instant.

However, in the next instant, Yan Jin placed his hands on the bed next to Shen Zhixian. Using his arms to prop himself up, he leaned his upper body slightly forward, his position extremely domineering. A pair of dark eyes gazed fixedly at Shen Zhixian as his temperament suddenly changed from the usual quiet calm into something quite penetrating and forceful.

He asked in an utterly decisive manner, "What did he say to Master?"

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 23.2

Their bodies were suddenly very close. Yan Jin leaned forward slightly, narrowing the distance between them even more. Shen Zhixian was taken by surprised. He couldn’t help trying to move back, only to realize that there was nowhere else on the bed he could go.

Shen Zhixian felt the young man’s hot breath on his cheeks.

In that moment, he realized with a start that his little disciple had grown up.

The youth whose head had once only reached up to his shoulder and who was always bullied by his fellow disciples had suddenly, unknowingly grown up.

He had grown into a dangerous man who could make him feel threatened just by being near.

Shen Zhixian’s heart suddenly began to pound fiercely. The feeling was completely different from the palpitating heart attack, which made him feel nothing but pain and suffering. This time, this feeling left him...

Shen Zhixian didn’t know how to describe this feeling. Even as a child, writing descriptive essays had always came easy to him but now, he found that no words could describe how he felt.

He lifted his eyes and saw that Yan Jin was still looking at him intensely. He immediately took out the known killer move, knitting his brows slightly and coughing, as if he was out of breath.

Yan Jin really fell for it. The intensity of the moment passed. He looked in concerned at Shen Zhixian, saying, “Master? Are you okay?”

Shen Zhixian pushed him away and rubbed his eyebrow, saying tiredly, “Just somewhat tired…”

So, in this way, the topic was once again avoided. Yan Jin pressed his lips together but did not dare to press any further. He forced himself to endure the question in his heart and instead focused on helping Shen Zhixian into the house. “It’s getting late and the weather had turned a bit cold. Let me help Master return to the house.”

Shen Zhixian was reluctant. The house was stuffy and he liked the slightly cool wind outside. But, obviously he’d gone too far in the past few days. He acted so well that Yan Jin thought he was still very weak.

Shen Zhixian closed his eyes and pretended to fall asleep, assured that his disciple would leave him alone.

Yan Jin stood silently by the soft bed before suddenly bending down. One arm pushed under Shen Zhixian’s legs while the other wrapped around his shoulders. He lifted the whole person into his arms.

Shen Zhixian was captured so quickly that he subconsciously wrapped his arms around Yan Jin’s neck. His eyes snapped open and he stared in surprise at Yan Jin’s side profile as he swiftly carried him into the house.

So, the mystery of these days, when he would fall asleep outside and awakened to find himself inside, was solved.

It felt like within just a few steps and, in the blink of an eye, Shen Zhixian was already being placed on the soft bed. Probably because Yan Jin was afraid Shen Zhixian would blame him, he quickly placed him on the bed and immediately stepped back to bow respectfully to him.

After watching him leave, Shen Zhixian remained stunned for a long time. He didn’t know what to say and could only pull the comforter over himself. He laughed abruptly.

Then he smiled and sighed helplessly.

…….

Not long after, the Sword Competition began.

The Sword Competition was held for two months, providing a good amount of time for Qingyun Sect to recruit new disciples. In addition to the small disciples already in the sect, there were many outsiders who registered to compete in hope of joining.

Shen Zhixian had no interest in this. He didn’t lack disciples, nor did he want to teach any more disciples. As a result, he simply used the excuse of going into seclusion to avoid making an appearance. He only showed up during the final three days of the competition, as a symbolic gesture of support for the sect. Even Song Ming had done the same.

On the last day, the top three winners would be decided.

The top three winners would not only have the chance to be accepted as a personal disciple to a Peak Elder or the Sect Leader, but they would also have the opportunity to enter Hidden Sword Pavilion and select a sword of their own.

Therefore, today could not be missed. Song Ming would be present and if Shen Zhixian made an excuse again, it could be considered as not giving Song Ming face. Not to mention, today...

Shen Zhixian sat on a platform above, his expression displaying a mixture of indifference and absentmindedness as he casually watched the fighting below.

Yan Jin sat just slightly behind him and also watched silently.

The battle below had been waging for a long time. The third place had already been settled, leaving the final two to fight it out on the stage.

In order to distinguish between sect disciples and outsiders, the sect disciples clothes were in a darker shade while the outsider's clothes were lighter. Shen Zixian could easily distinguish their identities. As he watched, he slightly raised an eyebrow and displayed a little more interest.

The contender who was gradually gaining the upper hand wore light-colored robes.

There might actually be an unexpected winner.

The sect disciples were well trained, giving them an advantage during the trial. Therefore, in the past years, not many outsiders were able to occupy the top three spots. But this year, there came a fierce one?

The sect disciple gradually began to lose his momentum, while his opponent became more and more fierce and finally won the top spot without any surprises.

The sect disciple who won second place was not discouraged when he lost. He smiled and congratulated the other person, then stepped down, leaving him alone on the stage to accept the applause from all sides.

Next, Song Ming or an Elder would speak a few words and then the disciple selection process that everyone had been waiting for would begin. But, unexpectedly, the young man who had just won first place opened his mouth, his tone not the least bit humble.

"This junior would be so bold as to ask to worship Elder Shen as a teacher."

The noise all around suddenly died and, in front of many pairs of eyes, the burly young man turned his head and fixed his gaze on Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian's was in the middle of drinking tea, and his eyes slightly

shifted.

The burly young man suddenly spoke like this, so all kinds of gazes instantly flew at him from all directions. He calmly put down the cup in his hand. The slight click was extremely clear in the silence.

“Everyone in Qingyun know that I am a waste,” he said calmly and frankly, completely disregarding the shocked eyes of the people around him. “It’s fine. You don’t need to waste time under my peak.”

Shen Zhixian had a lot of heart problems, and indeed everyone knew about it and thought it was extremely pitiful. But, this was the first time he’d spoken about it before such a large public.

For a while, the thought of everyone in the audience was conflicted.

The burly youth frowned, apparently reluctant to give up. "This junior has long admired Elder Shen and would like to worship Elder Shen as a teacher."

As soon as his words fell, Shen Zhixian clearly sensed that the energy around Yan Jin had changed, and the normally calm and restrained person suddenly emitted a cold, sharp deadliness.

He hesitated for a moment. He didn’t know what had happened to Yan Jin but, at this moment, he couldn’t ask. He could only refuse the other person once again.

Generally, since the request was made twice and was twice rejected, a sensible person would give up. After all, the more trouble he made, the less likely the other elders would take him on as a disciple.

But the burly young man did not spare himself, as if he really, truly wanted to worship Shen Zhixian as a teacher.

Seeing that he was holding the sword in his hand and kneeling down, Shen Zhixian frowned and did not speak. The scene became extremely awkward.

A young junior standing near the young man saw that the situation was getting bad and whispered, “Elder Shen hasn’t accepted anyone for a long time. You might as well…”

This young junior had lived with him for a long time and thought that he knew him well. Seeing that Sect Leader Song and the other elders were starting to frown, the junior was a little worried so he quietly tried to persuade him.

He shouldn’t have spoken. As soon as he spoke, the burly young man suddenly exploded into action. With a raised of his hand, the sword flew out of its sheath and was severely thrown at the young junior.

The little junior was unprepared, and he was standing close enough that there was no time to react at all. With a sharp sound, the sword directly penetrated his chest. His words abruptly stopped. The little junior’s eyes widened and, without another sound, he crashed into death with his eyes still open.

The sword move was so powerful that it passed through the little junior and flew toward the others behind him.

The group of young disciples were frightened and immediately panicked, shoving each other as they tried to get away. The little junior in front of them had died so miserably. No one thought of pulling out their sword to block it. Until an ashened face elder waved his sleeves, sending out a wave of energy to block the sword’s momentum. The sword finally stopped and dropped to the ground.

The elder who shot down the sword motioned for the disciples around him to capture the person.

The burly young man was not afraid of being restrained. He sneered, his temperament suddenly becoming gloomy and treacherous, hissing like a viper. His eyes looked coldly around him, and he shouted, "Why can't I?! Yan Jin can practice devilish cultivation, and it is so good. It allowed me to

get first place, so why can’t I?!”

The moment the words “devilish cultivation” came out, everyone went into an uproar.

Suspicious, disbelieving, dazed...All kinds of eyes gathered on Yan Jin. Even Song Ming and the four other elders looked over.

Third and Fourth Elders looked at each other with hints of worry in their eyes. Third elder gave a slight cough and took the lead to ask, “What’s going on--?”

He hadn’t finished speaking when chaos descended again. A disciple suddenly stumbled in and kneeled in Shen Zhixian’s direction, shouting in an exhausted voice, “Master, save me! Disciple Yan Shan! Demanded to sue Yan Jin!”

He looked a sorry sight, dressed in clothes that were ragged and torn, as if he’d just returned from a fight...Or, perhaps he’d lost a fight. Blood coated his exposed skin, making him look extremely miserable.

Yan Shen panted and continued with the charge, yelling, “Yan Jin had long ago entered the devil’s path. He even have private ties with devil cultivators and had requested that these devil cultivators enter the sect to disrupt the Sword Competition.”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 24.1

Alarm flashed across the crowd like a chain reaction, turning the atmosphere tense enough to cut through.

After a brief silence, there was a noise like oil splashing into a pan, and countless skeptical eyes pierced like sharp knives.

Yan Jin shifted, as if he was about to stand. A glacial, indifferent chill emanated from him. Shen Zhixian, who stood close to him, felt the extraordinary and conspicuously foreign energy.

Gloomy and ruthlessly tyrannical.

It instantly reminded him of the sword strike that Yan Jin had used a long time ago, and he remembered how his eyes had taken on this same ruthless and indifferent mien.

Shen Zhixian didn’t look behind him. Instead, he accurately gripped Yan Jin’s hand behind him, passing a soft and gentle pulse of qi into his body.

Yan Jin subconsciously wanted to resist but Shen Zhixian was holding on strategically to his wrist, making him unable to break away.

There was no expression on Shen Zhixian's face, but in his heart, there was a stormy sea.

A strand of devil qi was running wildly in Yan Jin's veins, arrogantly staining the originally pure spiritual qi and turning it dark and gloomy.

Obviously, this devil qi had been entrenched in Yan Jin's body for a long time. It had grown so wild that, even if Yan Jin had no intention of enter the devil’s path, he would be forced into it eventually.

Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth, and without hesitation, stripped the strand of devil qi from Yan Jin’s spirit roots, pulling it out of him and into himself.

Yan Jin's hand shook slightly, and he suddenly tilted his head to look at Shen Zhixian, his lips trembling. "Master ..."

He tried to retract his hand almost immediately, but Shen Zhixian tightly clasped him, refusing to let go.

Luckily, there was not much devil qi, and it was quickly introduced into Shen Zhixuan's body.

Shen Zhixian slowly retracted his hand. The devil qi raced through his body, turning his blood volatile. He clenched his hands into fists, while keeping them hidden in his sleeves, and endured the pain. His face was composed as he coldly said, "Yan Shen, you’ve allowed Master to be very disappointed.”

“Before, when you framed A’jin at the Hidden Sword Pavilion, I turned the other way because you were young. In the past few years, you’d repeatedly embarrassed A’jin time and again. And, still, I did not blame you much.”

This response was completely different from Yan Shen’s expectations. He was shocked. He snapped his head up and opened his mouth, wanting to speak.

But, Shen Zhixian did not give him the opportunity to speak and continued to say calmly, “A’jin has suffered enough grievances for the time being and certainly owe you nothing. But, now you’ve planted such a thing and endangered the sect. Not only that, you still want to frame A’jin.”

Third Elder responded in a timely manner. “Hidden Sword Pavilion? Elder Shen suddenly mentioned this. Was it regarding that time when Yan Jin trespassed into the Hidden Sword Pavilion? Was there a secret ulterior motive? Furthermore, what about these devil cultivators?”

Shen Zhixian said indifferently, “There’s no ulterior motive, just a gross injustice.”

He took a breath, flipped his wrist, and a sword appeared in his hand out of thin air. The sword emitted a faint aroma. A light mist floated from the sword and gradually condensed into a sword spirit.

Seeing the sword spirit, Song Ming’s face changed slightly, but he immediately calmed down. Aside from the fact that he kept watching Shen Zhixian from the corner of his eyes, no one found him abnormal at all.

Shen Zhixian said, “When I took this sword back from the Hidden Sword Pavilion, it was alive. After many years of cultivation, it barely managed to take shape. What the truth of that year was, please take a look.”

When he lifted his wrist, the sword spirit quickly rose up toward an open space where it flashed before everyone’s eyes, displaying a blurry picture.

It was the Hidden Sword Pavilion.

Most of the new disciples present barely had any contact with swords, much less carry one themselves. This was the first time they’d even heard of such things as sword spirits. The big disciples in the sect knew a little bit about sword spirits but only superficially. Therefore, they were all doubtful about Shen Zhixian’s words.

Because it was a sword without a master, there were no spiritual traces of a master to contend with. The sword spirit was very weak and the picture was faded. But, if one were to look closely, it was easy to see that someone had just secretly sneaking into the Hidden Sword Pavilion. Everyone thought it was Yan Jin.

A sharp-eyed disciple suddenly cried out, “Isn’t that Senior Brother Yan Shen?”

Yan Shen’s complexion underwent huge changes the moment he recognized his own figure--How could it be!

How could Shen Zhixian find such a thing?! Didn’t Song Ming say that this incident would never be detected by anyone?!

He resisted the urge to look back at Song Ming and, instead, refuted out loud, “Master, this isn’t true!”

Everyone ignored him, and the image continued. Within the illusion, Yan Shen hid something and shortly after, Yan Jin appeared. The two seemed to quarrel. Yan Shen quickly left, leaving Yan Jin to search for the hidden object.

Then, chaos descended.

The unowned sword spirit was too weak to continue supporting the illusion. It ended the moment Yan Jin and the disciples on patrol began fighting.

The people within the crowd began to engage in numerous heated discussions about what they’d just seen.

Yan Shen’s face was ugly, but he still bitterly persevered. “Master, Yan Jin is genuinely and truly a devil cultivator. If you don’t believe me, let him come out! Let Sect Leader and the Elders investigate and see if he has devil qi in him.”

As soon as his voice fell, the discussions all around went quiet for a brief moment, before it became even more heated. Suspicious eyes swept toward Yan Jin. Yan Shen had accused Yan Jin several times now. What if Yan Jin really was a devil cultivator?

Especially due to the burly young man’s murderous act earlier, everyone was very sensitive to the words devil qi. Although everyone had been

making noises, there was still no follow-up. A young disciple from within the crowd boldly shouted, “Senior Brother Yan Jin! Come out and let the elders check you. If you’re innocent, the elders won’t do you wrong!

The moment his words came out, it was immediately echoed by everyone. The scene almost became uncontrollable.

“Presumptuous!” Shen Zhixian sternly shouted. The groups of young disciples were stunned by his sudden outburst and became silent.

--What a good scheme.

As understanding dawned, Shen Zhixian frowned, suddenly realizing what was going on

Someone was using Yan Shen to scheme against Yan Jin! Sneaking a ray of devil qi into him, just to later accuse him of being a devil cultivator!

Over the past few years, the immortal cultivators had been working hard to crack down on devil cultivators. If they were to find devil qi on Yan Jin....

The black hands behind the scenes was not only forcing Yan Jin to a dead end, as someone who was raising a devil cultivator as a disciple, Shen Zhixian himself would also be implicated.

Shen Zhixian was expecting Yan Shen to do something today. He thought that with Yan Shen’s ability, he would probably harm himself and accuse Yan Jin of hurting him, crowning him as a blackguard who would hurt his fellow disciples without any conscience. Shen Zhixian fully intended to use this matter to turn over the old accounts and sever his master and disciple relationship with Yan Shen. However, he didn't expect that Yan Shen would be so talented this time and actually involve devil cultivators.

Shen Zhixian refused to believe that Yan Shen would be able to do such a trick without someone standing behind him.

Anyway, this matter wasn’t that big of a deal and the devil qi in Yan Jin’s

body was gone...As Shen Zhixian was thinking about it, he noticed that Yan Jin had stood up with a calm face and was about to step forward.

Today's incident had developed unexpectedly. Shen Zhixian also hadn't mentioned anything to Yan Jin and yet, although Yan Jin's face was heavy, he displayed no surprise.

A thought flashed through Shen Zhixian's mind. His eyes narrowed slightly and he moved forward in a calm manner, blocking Yan Jin's way.

Yan Jin was barred by him and hesitated, saying, "Master."

Shen Zhixian didn't respond. He looked around calmly, his gazed stopping for a moment on the little disciple who took the lead, who, upon noticing his deep gaze on him, suddenly cowered. With a flick of his wrist, Shen Zhixian shot out powerful strand of qi, pulling Yan Shen's sword straight into his hand!

Immediately afterward, slender, jade-like fingers flew across the sword's blade, repeating the previous motion. The blade suddenly trembled and a faint aroma drifted out. A hazy sword spirit floated up again, this time display a new image.

It showed Yan Shen speaking to the burly young man!

The sword spirit inside Hidden Sword Pavillion was weak and could not broadcast any audio. Yan Shen's sword was of better quality and the sword spirit was also strong. As a result, a faint voice could be heard.

"....This time, I'm going to make sure that Yan Jin can't free himself!"

"Oh, this humble person should just roll back into the quagmire. What if Yan Jin…."

"Relax and don't hesitate to kill. I assure you that I can let you leave safely."

As he listened to the intermittent audio of the conversation, Yan Shen was astonished and horrified. He speechlessly watched the scene of himself laying out his plans and couldn’t help thinking: His sword, since when had it developed a sword spirit?!

Yan Shen’s plan today was actually very simple. Allow the young devil cultivator to make some trouble and hold the pot over Yan Jin’s head. He will then appear as if he’d been injured by Yan Jin and, under everyone’s eyes, report that Yan Jin had become a devil.

Under everyone’s eyes and mouth, no matter how much Master respected Yan Jin, he wouldn’t be able to cover for Yan Jin any longer. Once the Sect Leader and the other elders checked, the devil qi in Yan Jin’s body would be revealed, thus confirming his identity as a devil cultivator!

At that time, the biggest winner would no doubt be him!

But why, why had things developed like this... His sword didn’t have a sword spirit! How could Master make a sword spirit come out?!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 24.2

Yan Shen was shocked speechless, but the burly young man noticed that things were not good and immediately shouted, "Hey! Yan Something. I’m not playing anymore. You said that you would keep me safe. I’m leaving!"

He began to struggle, but he was held firmly in place by the Elder's personal disciples.

Although he may have won first place, his opponents were only small disciples and those who had not yet officially entered the sect. He was actually just an ordinary devil cultivator. With a few words, he’d managed to firmly betray and sell Yan Shen clean.

Yan Shen suddenly found himself in a situation of having enemies on both sides. His face shifted between blue and white, his lips trembling, and his mouth repeating "It’s all fake.” He repeated the words louder and louder, until he became hoarse.

Shen Zhixian ignored his desperate, futile struggles and slightly shifted his gaze to Song Ming, saying, “This matter is perfectly clear. Yan Shan colluded with devil cultivators, disrupted the Sword Competition, and framed others. All are major crimes, which I will never condone.”

Song Ming frowned. His talent for the sword path was not high and, therefore, he was unable to perceive many things related to it. Theoretically speaking, the sword spirit should only obey the call of the master, but Shen Shixian was different….

Shen Shixian was very talented in the sword path and knew a lot about

swords. If he could summon a sword spirit without a master, or even in spite of the master, and compel it to reveal the truth, then Song Ming….was inclined to believe it.

It was no wonder then that, despite knowing nothing, Shen Zhixian insisted on going to Hidden Sword Pavilion. It was to get a sword!

He was just waiting for this moment!

Song Ming didn’t know how much Shen Zhixian knew.

In a split second, countless thoughts turned in Song Ming’s mind. He turned his head to look at the elders and asked, "What do the elders think?"

“It’s reliable.” The speaker was unexpectedly a respected elder who usually buried himself in work and who never liked to meddle in the affairs of others. He looked at the hazy sword spirit and waited for it to re-enter the sword body before adding, “Sword spirits cannot lie.”

In the sect, this elder was considered as a person of virtue and prestige. When he said this, he was essentially siding with Shen Zhixian. As a result, the crowd immediately cast their eyes on Yan Shen, who was on the verge of collapse.

"Master! Yan Jin has long been a devil cultivator. He is conspiring against you and the entire sect! Disciple did this to show you Yan Jin’s true face!" He shouted sharply, realizing that he was reaching a dead end. Then, he staked it all in one throw, yelling, "The disciple really and truly did these things...Sect Leader Song knew all about it! Sect Leader Song, you promised me that so long as….”

"Presumptuous!"

A small tea cup slammed into the floor right in front of Yan Shen. The cup splintered into sharp fragments and the shards flew out, cutting his arms and causing blood to flow.

Shen Zhixian looked coldly at him, his eyes icy and unfriendly. “Lad, not only did you violate the law and secretly collude with devil cultivators, now you also want to slander the sect leader?!”

He appeared to be extremely angry. “Yan Shen committed many crimes. As his Master, it was my grave mistake for not teaching him well. I want you all to witness that I, Shen Zhixian, will drive out this traitor today.”

In the uproar, Shen Zhixian took the sword from his waist and threw it backward to Yan Jin behind him. He said, “For harboring such evil intentions, he is not worthy of the name Qingyun. Today, I will forthwith disperse your spiritual force. Our master and disciple relationship, from now on, comes to an end.”

He turned to the side and whispered to Yan Jin, "Go."

This turn of event stunned everyone.

Yan Jin’s hands tightened on the sword. Calm as he was, he was still surprised by Shen Zhixian’s action. As he reigned back his shock, his lips tightened when he saw Shen Zhixian’s hands half-hidden by his sleeves. They were clenched so tight that they were turning white. Yan Jin gritted his teeth and walked out.

Yan Shen became panic stricken. He crawled backward and tried to run.

Yan Jin unsheathed Frost Return Sword, which emitted a cold chill. As he walked forward, he pointed the sword at Yan Shen, who was immediately nailed to the spot by the sword qi.

The so-call dispersal of spiritual force could only be done with one method; that was, to sever the spirit root so that the body could no longer grasp nor recycle spiritual force.

It was like a length of water hose that had been cut in two. The two parts were no longer connected and so water could not flow through.

Yan Shen struggled frantically but he couldn't escape the cold sword qi. He wailed in despair. With a severed spirit root, he would become a waste. He would lose grasp of the path to immortality!

He was terribly scared, and his mouth shouted wildly for Song Ming to save him from Shen Zhixian. The more he shouted, the heavier Song Ming’s face became.

He wanted to protect Yan Shen, simply to shut him up and prevent him from talking. However, Shen Zhixian's attitude made it difficult for him to intervene.

He grinded his teeth hatefully. He hated Yan Shen’s thoughtless behavior, hated Shen Zhixian’s clear-sightedness. Finally, he took a deep breath. But just when he was about to speak, Yan Jin had already slashed the sword down. A ray of sword qi shot out, cleanly severing Yan Shen’s spirit root!

Blood spurted from his wound and soon reddened the ground beneath him.

Yan Shen's scream almost broke the sky. He rolled on the ground, incoherent with agony. “Yan Jin! You lowly person—Ahh! You’ll die a terrible death!”

"Shen Zhixian—Shen Zhixian—You ruthless and faithless human waste! I had so much respect for you!" He panted, as if he was on the verge of death. His eyes full of resentment and hatred shifted to Yan Jin, and his mouth opened to spit out foul venom. "Yan Jin, don't...don't be too pleased with yourself!"

"If Shen Zhixian can treat me like this today, he will hurt you heartily the next day. He’ll abandon you as if you were a fool!” When he said this, his voice dropped to a whisper due to pain and only Yan Jin heard.

Yan Jin's eyes darkened, and the hand holding the sword hilt tightened for a moment. The tip of the sword unconsciously nodded to the ground and

became stained with deep blood.

"Om!"

The calm Frost Return suddenly shook violently and a ray of sword qi burst out, seeming very resistant and disgusted with the blood.

Fourth Elder frowned. “There is devil qi...Elder Shen’s Frost Return is the most resistant to devil qi. Yan Shen’s blood…”

He spoke casually, but also didn’t intentionally lower his voice. Immediately, the young disciples near him heard and began whispering among themselves, realizing the truth.

Even if they still have a hint of doubt in their hearts, that strand of doubt vanished completely with Fourth Elder’s words. Frost Return was resistant to devil qi; it was perfectly fine in Yan Jin’s hand but reacted violently the moment it touched Yan Shen’s blood!

Yan Shen said that there was devil qi in Yan Jin, but it was all clearly slander! The one who colluded with devil cultivators and who had a devil in his heart was clearly Yan Shen!

The little disciples immediately realized that they’d finally grasped the truth and continued to whisper amongst themselves. Seeing that he’d achieved his purpose, Fourth Elder settled back with satisfaction, continuing to drink tea and watch the rest of the proceedings.

Yan Shen was speechless. The pain caused by a broken spirit root was unbearable to the average person. He was paralyzed on the ground, slightly twitching, and on the verge of fainting.

The burly young man who had been trying to escape also received the same treatment, with his spiritual force wasted, as an account for the young disciple who’d tragically died. This left the remaining odds and ends, which could not be so easily cleaned up by ordinary people.

Someone took away the corpse and cleaned the blood off the ground. The Sword Competition ended in this manner, wholly disrupted. Seeing that Song Ming and the Elders' face were not very good, the disciples whispered for a while, then they gradually became silent.

Song Ming furrowed his brows anxiously, still wondering how he should clean up this mess. Looking at Shen Zhixian's posture today, Song Ming could not believe that he was totally unaware of his involvement.

Of course, Song Ming knew about Yan Shen's plot today. He'd watched Yan Shen's actions coldly, quietly pampering him from behind, and even assisted him slightly; otherwise, how could the little devil cultivator enter so easily?

Shen Zhixian was not easy to deal with. Naturally, he didn't expect to be able to knock Shen Zhixian down today. But, if something were to happen with Yan Jin, it would still affect Shen Zhixian's status. And, if they were successful, the only disciple left for Shen Zhixian to rely on would be Yan Shen….

Making it more convenient for him to plan later.

He didn't expect that Yan Shen, this useless waste, would try to steal the chicken only to lose the rice used to lure it. A few years ago, when Yan Shen's scheme with the Hidden Sword Pavilion came to nothing, he should not have continued to put his faith in him!

What foolproof? It was all nonsense! He'd exhausted his mind to put a person at Shen Zhixian's side, wanting to use him to stir water and ruin Shen Zhixian's name. Who knew that this person would be so useless?!

Today's event, except for the beginning, had derailed in all directions. It was all completely outside of Song Ming's expectations.

Song Ming really wanted to stick a sword or two in Yan Shen, so as to avoid him turning around and opening his mouth to spit out bad things about him. Although he'd not negotiated with Yan Shen in person, if Shen

Zhixian were to truly investigate down to the smallest details...

Song Ming took a deep breath and was about to say two sentences to let Shen Zhixian take the person back first. Once Shen Zhixian took the person back, he could secretly make a move to make it seem like Yan Shen had up and died by himself.

At that time, the person would have died at Fifth Peak and would, therefore, have nothing to do with him...He prepared himself and opened his mouth just halfway, but it was already too late. Shen Zhixian had made the first move.

“Master!”

“Elder Shen!”

“Ahh!”

A range of surprised and panicked exclamations sounded suddenly. Song Ming’s eyebrows jerked. He turned his head to look and saw Shen Zhixian’s qi heart attack. The person in question spit out a mouthful of blood, then his eyes closed, and he fainted.

Song Ming: “.....”

Song Ming finger’s crushed the table’s edge.

Xixi: Lol...SZX sure knows how to use his "illness" to his best advantage.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 25

The last day of the Sword Competition ended in a mess.

Elder Shen “fainted” and was picked up by his disciple. Under everyone’ shocked gaze, Yan Jin directly held the person, leaving behind a sentence, “Yan Shen’s matter can be left for Sect Leader Song to decide,” before hurrying away.

Song Ming was so annoyed that the table corner on the other side was also crushed into pieces.

Under everyone’s gaze, he could only order for Yan Shen to be locked in the sect dungeon to await further punishments. The worst of it was that, in this way, Yen Shen could not “accidentally” have a mishap. After all, the person was under his nose. If something were to happen, it would only give cause for others to talk about him.

Song Ming hated gossip about himself, especially because he lacked ability when compared to others. Whenever he heard something to this degree, he would quietly bear it in his heart, and in the future, he would find an opportunity to exact vengeance just as quietly.

After handing the rest of the matters to the other elders, Song Ming took the blue tendons that were bubbling up in his head and left with a cold face, flicking his sleeves—not because he didn’t want to maintain the kind and steady image of the sect leader but because he was afraid he might spit blood otherwise!

The kind of person that man was, he sure could teach his disciple to be just the same!

An arrogant person like Shen Zhixian should have no discisple!

Song Ming returned to his room, so angry that he flipped a table, knocking over the cups, which shattered on the ground. His chest was rapidly rising and falling as he panted, his face as dark as the bottom of a pot.

How did things manage to develop so out of control today?!!

When Shen Zhixian was in the limelight, he could do nothing but peep secretly like a mouse hiding in the gutter, suffering from the great disparities between their strengths. Later, he waited with great difficulty for something to happen to Shen Zhixian's body. He'd overcame all the stumbling blocks that stood in his way, only to reach this point

In the first year, he was quite smooth, holding the image of a good sect leader and a good brother. Although Shen Zhixian was cold to him, he could still bear with it.

But, since the failure of the Hidden Sword Pavilion, he felt that Shen Zhixian was gradually returning to his original self; every move, every smile, all revealing a superior and noble image!

In front of Shen Zhixian, even if he was the Sect Leader, he was still wholly inferior!

Song Ming bitterly hated. Tea drenched the corner of his robe, turning it cold, matching the gradually deepening chill in his expression.

He'd not retreated since doing that thing that year.

Retreat was for the dead. Losing was for the dead.

He had only one path and that was forward.

.....

Fifth Peak, in the summit house.

Smelling the familiar bitterness, Shen Zhixian didn’t know whether he should continue to pretend to be unconscious or to “wake up.”

If he continued to be unconscious, his intimate disciple might fill him with a pot of elixir. If he “woke up,” Yan Jin might be more forgiving and allow him to drink only half.

The thought was like a stone being lifted from his mind. Shen Zhixian put on the act of an ancestor, mumbling in a low voice and gradually shifting his body on the bed. His eyelids slowly drifted open.

The long eyelashes trembled and there was a faint layer of mist within the depths of his eyes. Shen Zhixian’s gaze looked blank for a moment, before he managed to focus on the man in front of him. “A’jin…?”

The young man's originally serious and worried expression suddenly relaxed by half, revealing a smile Shen Zhixian had never seen before. Although, the smile was so fleeting that he barely caught sight of it.

Yan Jin set the elixir aside and, after helping Shen Zhixian sit up, he went to grab a cup.

Shen Zhixian lifted his hand. Holding the young man ’s wrist, he coughing softly and quietly said, “It’s not necessary. I don’t need to drink.”

Yan Jin paused and looked back, obviously not agreeing. However, Shen Zhixian was more determined than him. He shook his head, squinted for a moment, and put his foot down on the position of unwilling to drink.

Yan Jin couldn't help it. Shen Zhixian was awake, and he didn't dare to force feed him. He had to ask, "Master, how are you feeling?"

Knowing what he was asking, Shen Zhixian shifted slightly and turned his

attention inward to conduct an internal evaluation. The original body was in the tenth stage before his heart ailment. As a result, his spiritual power was pure and majestic. The heart injury only prevented him from using his spiritual force frequently and, fortunately, did not dissipate his accumulated spiritual force over the years.

The devil qi was trapped in a corner by his spiritual force and was being slowly consumed. According to Shen Zhixian's calculations, it would probably be gone in a day or two.

Shen Zhixian shook his head. "There's no harm."

Then, he looked at Yan Jin and softly said, "A'jin were you already aware?"

So he already knew there was dark qi in his body and probably wanted to use this magic to do something. To do what?

Yan Jin tightened his mouth and made a sound of assent.

"Yan Shen wanted to frame you, but you didn't even refute him and did nothing—Why?"

Yan Jin didn't want to lie to Shen Zhixian, so he could only remain silent.

After a long time, Shen Zhixian still couldn't get an answer out of him so he could only sigh. In a voice brimming with disappointment and helplessness, he simply said, "This devil qi had been in your body for a while. You noticed that it was there, yet allowed it to develop...Did you want to become a devil cultivator and betray the master on the spot? From now on, you wanted to break it off with Master?"

"Master, I…" Who knew which words managed to jab at Yan Jin's soft spot. His lips moved, seeming to find it difficult to speak. "I...Disciple… I'm not…"

But, Shen Zhixian didn't give him an opportunity to explain. He seemed to

be discouraged, as if he’d finally given up. With exhausted, slightly lowered eyes, he murmured, "I know you have ambition in your heart and have wanted to leave for a long time now. Today, I won’t stop you anymore. After you’ve arranged matters, you can leave to seek experience.”

He continued to act like the reluctant master, lifting up his eyes to reveal a calm silence. With a sigh, Shen Zhixian added, “When you're done, if you find that you’re unwilling to come back, then you don’t need to.”

Yan Jin’s eyes widened, unable to believe what he was hearing. He stepped forward, his knees knocking against the edge of the bed and making a loud noise. Hearing this, Shen Zhixian thought that it might hurt, but Yan Jin didn’t seem to be conscious of it. Instead, he carefully asked, “Master, you, are you really in such a hurry for the disciple to leave?”

The tone was apprehensive and uneasy, like a little beast that was about to be beaten.

—The little hedgehog was about to be hooked.

Shen Zhixian smiled in his heart, but his face was full of sadness and helplessness as he whispered, "The world is big. Once you experience it, you might not want to come back. If you still want to come back, then that means that you’re willing to recognize me as your master…”

Shen Zhixian paused for a moment, and sure enough he caught a glimmer of light in Yan Jin's eyes. He smiled mildly, sat slightly upright, and slowly pulled a piece of paper out of the pillow-side storage bag.

"If you would still like to recognize me as a master, we might as well complete this deed."

Sandwiched between long, white fingers was a piece of paper as thin as cicada wings. It was slightly yellow, and the edges were uneven and worn out, looking like it’d been torn out of a book many ages ago.

Yan Jin shifted his gaze to the piece of paper, hesitated for a moment, and

took it carefully.

This piece of paper was not very well preserved, and the words on it were blurred. In order to make out the words, he had to squint his eyes and look carefully.

"I found this by chance. It’s a contract between master and disciple. I thought that, if you want, we could create a binding contract between us."

Because it was not a complete page, the above content was unknown. The first half of the fragmentary parchment was the method of making a contract. The few lines in the second half seemed to detail the contract’s effect. The general idea was that after the contract was initiated, they could not hurt each other. Otherwise, the violator would be punished with heavenly retribution.

There was another line at the end, which was too vague, and Yan Jin studied it for a long time before faintly recognizing a few words.

…Be as of one heart and never let go.

His mind was entangled by Shen Zhixuan's words, making him subconsciously want to follow along with Shen Zhixian's way of thinking.

A master and disciple contract... Between the master and disciple, they would be united together, so as not to hurt each other, as if... There didn’t seem to be anything wrong with it.

Yan Jin thought absentmindedly that this contract was really suitable for them both.

He pinched the paper fragment between his fingers, suddenly thinking that the journey ahead was boundless and indistinct, and he didn’t know what course to follow.

Master wanted him to leave...

Obviously, his long awaited desire had born fruit. But why was it that, after being told to leave by Shen Zhixian, he felt really uncomfortable in his heart?

He even had the faint idea of not wanting to leave.

There was a clump of weed in his mind, and he desperately pulled it, making excuses for himself. Yes!

Sui Jian!

There was still Sui Jian!

He still hadn't figured out what happened that day when he heard the name “Sui Jian” mentioned. He felt deeply and instinctively that he’d missed this link in two lifetimes.

The pale face of the man in front of him was completely different from the person in his memory—No, the memory was too chaotic. Two lifetimes...Perhaps, more than two lifetimes. The memories were mixed together, pitted with holes. There were many things he still couldn’t remember, still couldn’t piece together. Just by appearance alone, it was impossible to judge what was real and what was illusion.

He had vague speculations but didn’t dare to verify. The feeling of cowardice in this matter seemed to be entrenched in his bones.

Fearing, hesitating, painting the ground as a prison while perched on the edge of the truth, trapping himself in a chaotic memory and unable to escape.

"—A’jin?"

The young man in front of his eyes seemed to be lost in a conflict of thoughts. Shen Zhixian's tone was a little hesitant, wondering what was wrong? What did he see in the contract?

This fragmentary page was long and boring. He found it when he was looking for a book in the original’s old study. At that time, the page was randomly sandwiched in a whimsical book. If he’d turned it over a few pages instead just one, it would really be impossible for him to discover this thing.

Immediately after recognizing the first few words, he immediately pondered and thought that this was probably a contract that could protect his own safety. It was written above that the two people who agreed would not hurt each other—if this wasn’t perfect for him and Yan Jin, than what was?!

Shen Zhixian immediately tried to check the origin of the contract. However, the paper was too worn out, and the original Shen Zhixian also had no memory of where it came from. He didn't even have a name to go by. He checked for a long time and still found nothing.

After a long time, he gradually forgot about it. The reason why he thought about it again was because of Yan Jin's action in the hot spring.

He’d felt Yan Jin's killing intent fully and clearly.

So this page was taken out again. After some thought, Shen Zhixian finally made a decision and began to prepare for it.

Waiting for this day.

“If A’jin is unwilling, then just forget it. Everyone has his own will, and I shouldn't force it ..." Shen Zhixian suddenly coughed, leaning forward slightly, as if to cough out the whole heart and lungs. He coughed until he became hoarse.

With great difficulty, he stopped coughing. Shen Zhixian sighed and said, "....It’s difficult to let go of this master and disciple relationship that we’ve had for many years now. But, since you are unwilling...cough, cough, cough!”

This dose of strong medicine went down the right way. Yan Jin listened to him cough as if his spirit was going to fly away and no longer cared about the page fragment, allowing it to drop to the floor. He patted Shen Zhixian's back carefully, saying, "Binding...Binding! Master, you mustn't get angry. Disciple will agree to the binding…"

--And the little hedgehog was hooked.

Biting the hook, he ran toward the direction Shen Zhixian wanted.

Pretending to cough was also very tiresome. Shen Zhixian calmed down for a bit and reluctantly allowed himself to be fed two sips of elixir. Afterward, he gasped and pushed Yan Jin's hand away. "The binding requires incense...Go and bring the small incense burner from over there."

Yan Jin didn't dare disobey him and obediently went to grab the thing.

The incense burner was small enough to be nestled within the palm of a hand. It looked simple with only a few patterns carved on the sides. Shen Zhixian took it in his hand and gently lifted the lid. It was unknown what was burning inside, but a delicate layer of gray drifted out, exuding a faint, familiar aroma.

Yan Jin suddenly lifted his eyes to look at Shen Zhixian. This aroma...He smelled it when Shen Zhixian summoned the sword spirit!

A doubtful expression appeared on his face, and he couldn't help but ask, "Master, this is…"

"Puppetwood." Shen Zhixian closed the lid and replaced the lid. "This wood can be shaped to look like a real person. Ash can create illusions, making it difficult to distinguish between what is true and what is false. Go and throw them away under the cliff. Don't let anyone see."

Yan Jin took the small incense burner, suddenly understanding completely. When he spoke, his voice was a bit hoarse, "Master, then those sword spirits…."

“...A’jin, this stinky pig!”

Yan Shen’s voice suddenly sounded. Yan Jin subconsciously turned toward the sound but only saw Xiao Caoya flying in from the open window.

“Very bad! Very bad!” This time, the voice change to that of the burly youth.

Yan Jin froze and stared blankly for a moment, even as he realized--Since the sword spirit was made with a combination of puppetwood mixed with ash, the so-called “truth” was just an illusion created by master. And, the dialogue between Yan Shen and the devil cultivator…

Xiao Caoya can really learn how to imitate voices!

Yan Jin had a glint of a smile in his eyes. After the smile disappeared, his eyes became a little moist and his heart a little sour. He was silent for a long moment before he finally took the small incense burner out. As he walked out the door, he heard Shen Zhixian’s voice.

First, came one voice, then another.

“A’jin is a little hedgehog!

“....Okay, you can stop now.”

Xixi: Bahaha! I’m guessing the first voice was Xiao Caoya and the second was SZX telling him to shut up before A’jin hears.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 26

After the Sword Competition, Shen Zhixian went into seclusion once again on the grounds of conditioning his body after his heart attack.

Song Ming sent several disciples to ask what ought to be done with Yan Shen. For several days, they came countless times to Fifth Peak to see Shen Zhixian, only to be turned away every time. The response was the same: Do as the Sect Leader’s wish. Fifth Peak has nothing to say.

One small disciple even wanted to break into the summit directly, only to find Yan Jin holding a sword at the door!

Although Senior Brother Yan seemed to have no expression on his face, the small disciple clearly felt his murderous aura.

It was within the murderous spirit of “say nothing, ask nothing, just fight.”

The small disciple ran away in fright.

Yan Jin was not murderous for no reason. The other disciples didn’t know the truth and thought that Shen Zhixian was really in retreat. Only Yan Jin knew that Shen Zhixian just didn’t want to see him.

On the seventh day in front of Shen Zhixian’s closed door, Yan Jin finally knelt at the door and called, “Master.”

There was still no response.

Yan Jin was silent for a long time, and conscientiously kowtowed three

times, whispering, “Master, disciple is leaving now.”

In the end, he couldn’t bear to force Shen Zhixian. If Shen Zhixian didn’t want to see him then he’ll leave for a period of time. Perhaps, by that time, Master’s anger would have died down.

Yan Jin stood up. Many things had happened in such a short period of time. Perhaps, he really should leave for a while to calm down...Master, Sui Xian.

He chewed on these two words and walked back, feeling upset. His pace was not as smooth as usual, his attention not as sharp as usual. The window that had been closed for many days quietly opened to reveal a trace of green.

It wasn’t until Yan Jin’s figure had completely disappeared that the slit at the window quietly closed once again. After a while, the door squeaked open and a young man in white came out.

He had an incredibly refined and noble appearance. His eyes were clear and pure, and when he leisurely shook out his fan, it made him looked very lively--the kind of liveliness that often made people draw swords and dance and write about.

Noble and reckless. These were two contradictory words that described him perfectly, that balanced on his features harmoniously.

He walked out leisurely, took a deep breath, and a relaxed and easy smile stretched over his lips. “...any longer, and I would have died in that room.”

The door was half-opened, revealing a table. Sitting at the table was Shen Zhixian, who was raising his hand to calmly pour tea.

The young man in white folded his fan and rapped the tip against the door. Shen Zhixian was alerted and turned to look over, setting aside the teacup as he did so.

“Elder Shen, I’ll be troubling you during this time.” The young man in white clasped his hand in a respectful bow. The puppet in the room raised his hand with a gentle expression. As he did so, his sleeves swayed, exuding a faint fragrance.

The young man in white carefully looked over the person in the room and, finally at ease, folded his fan before turning away smartly to leave.

.....

Meanwhile, Yan Jin silently went down the mountain. Feeling at a loss, he turned around a few times to look at the mountain peak that he’d lived in for several years.

Although he’d been planning to leave for a while now, when the time really came, he found himself feeling adrift.

He didn’t know what to do or where to go.

When Yan Jin left, he didn’t tell anyone so, aside from Shen Zhixian, no one knew.

Many years ago, he entered by himself. Now, he also left by himself, carrying nothing but a sword, two sets of clothes, and a few spirit stones.

Yan Jin stood for a moment in silence before he finally stooped to pick up a dead branch. He tossed it and headed in the direction it pointed.

Because he had no specific direction, Yan Jin did not buy a mount like other disciples who went out to practice. Of course, the biggest reason was also that he was broke.

In fact, Shen Zhixian was very generous when it came to money. In addition to the usual monthly allowance given to his close disciples, Shen Shixian also allocated a lot of spirit stones to him from his own private account.

Yan Jin hadn’t used the money much and mainly left it untouched. He only took it out later to buy Shen Zhixian the soft jade bed and the white jade table. In the end, there were only a few spirit stones left, which he brought out with him.

But, he was not willing to use these spirit stones, wanting to keep them as a memorial.

So, the first thing Yan Jin did was to offer his service to a little old man living at the foot of the mountain. He worked for three days at his house and finally received some compensation—a few strings of copper and a few broken pieces of silver.

The little grandpa lived alone, but his family was wealthy and he had no shortage of money. Although Yan Jin was taciturn, he was willing to work hard, which made Grandpa appreciate him greatly. Grandpa even wanted to introduce his granddaughter to him. After being politely rejected, he felt that it was quite regrettable and, as a result, tried to give him more money than was worked for as compensation.

Yan Jin thanked him very seriously and only took the amount that was due him. Then, he said goodbye and left.

Yan Jin, the poor and quiet Qingyun Sect member and a personal disciple of Shen Zhixian, worked odd jobs along the way. As a result, his journey was quite slow. When he arrived at a small town not far from Qingyun Sect, he finally had enough money to spend a night at an inn.

He randomly chose a small inn to stay in but, unexpectedly, as he was handing over payment, a group of more than a dozen people rushed in and said, “Boss, Boss! Are there any rooms available?! We need six rooms!l

The owner of the inn had just handed the receipt to Yan Jin and found it was very difficult to hear the words. “There are five left..."

The group immediately became frustrated. A younger boy rubbed his hair into a mess, clearly annoyed, and muttered, "Ah, it's gone ..."

With a blink of an eye, he just happened to see the paper in Yan Jin's hands. Noticing the sword around Yan Jin's waist and guessing he was a sword cultivator, his eyes flashed. He immediately came over and looked at him eagerly. "This fellow, are you willing to give us this room? We're colleagues who don't want to be separated… There is an inn in front that has three first-class rooms left. If the Daoist is willing to change, we're willing to bear the cost of your accommodation."

This group of juveniles looked very young, and the young man who'd just spoken also looked to be about fifteen or sixteen years old. They looked like little disciples who'd left their sect behind to tour and experience the outside world.

Yan Jin was silent for a moment, not knowing what to think, and finally just quietly handed the receipt to them.

The youth was overjoyed and felt for his money bag, intending to give him money. But, Yan Jin waved his hand and refused. Then he turned out of the inn and walked to the other side.

He wanted to find another ordinary inn, but the cheaper inns were full, leaving only the inn with the three first-class rooms left.

Yan Jin could only go there and spend half of his money.

However, he didn't feel bad about the money at all. Just to save trouble, he decided to eat dinner at the inn. After a brief rest in the room, he put down his travel bag and just went downstairs with his sword.

It was dinner time, and the downstairs was very lively. The boss was said to be a story lover, and a storyteller was commissioned to tell a story every day.

Today, the storyteller didn't know that the story he told would cause a listener to be upset and start an argument with him.

"Old Mister, what are you talking about to this crowd?" This was said by a man in white. With his back to Yan Jin, he sat idly near the storyteller, his action seeming very lazy as he waved the folding fan in his hand.

The storyteller was a bearded old man who was irritable by nature. "Naturally, what I'm talking about are these two sets of books that are all over the streets. I'm talking about the love between the two of them. What's it to you?""

The fan's lazy action paused and the man in white slightly straightened, as if surprised. "The streets are full of these two sets? What kind of books are they?"

The old storyteller probably liked the story of "those two people." He suddenly let out a derisive snort and pulled out a thick stack of books under the table. He dropped them on the table and lovingly smooth his hand over the corner of a book. He said, "Take a look yourself."

The man in white casually took the objectionable books. Who knew that the more pages he flipped through, that more his back would stiffen and the more wooden his face would become. After flipping two more pages, he suddenly switched to the next book. After flipping through several more books, he finally threw the bundle of books and said angrily, "Who wrote these damnable things?!"

After they were thrown, a few books fell out and scattered, displaying the serial titles. The person nearby saw the titles and became excited. "Serving My Master? Co-habitating with Master? The Gentle Master Pampers His Disciple?"

He let out a squeal of excitement. "It's the Qingyun's Daily Life book series. These series are so addictive. But I wasn't able to grab last month's latest update."

The person who wrote the Qingyun Daily Life series had a good reputation for stories and gossip.

“Hey, I knew that one! The one about the Master and Disciple...Oh, it’s so good!”

“Yes, what a beautiful master and disciple love story. Say, did the master sleep with his disciple yet?”.

“Seemed like it hasn’t happened yet. The story so far got up to when the Master was admiring the moon, drinking a jug of alcohol. He slightly narrowed his eyes at his disciple…”

“....Ya! That disciple! Is the Master going to coerce him after getting drunk?”

“And then what happened? What happened?”

The old storyteller sobered up with a snap and continued to talk.

That Qingyun’s Daily Life series!

The person who wrote it was probably too afraid to let others know his identity.

Which thoughtless little disciple would write such stories blindly, spinning untruths just for the sake of catching a fat meal?!

As he listened calmly to their discussions, the man in white, Shen Zhixian, squeezed the folding fan in his hands, which emitted a creaking sound.

He’d just flipped through the books, reading a few words here and there, because it was about “Qingyun.” But, he immediately recognized that the two protagonists in the books were him and Yan Jin. It was all about him and Yin Jin’s relationship, down to the smallest details.

Here he was, pushing for a harmonious master and disciple relationship that would cement a beautiful future. But, the things that were being written in these irritating books…

How could he not be angry?

Although the Qingyun Daily Life series didn't explicitly state it, based on Shen Zhixian's many years of reading experience, he could see at a glance that there were some subtle emotions and hidden passions between the master and disciple.

Even the sword practice between master and disciple could ripple with lingering gazes filled with hidden emotions. When the disciple gave the master a bowl of medicine, the bowl seemed to be filled with deep emotions, just like the cup of wine exchanged by the bride and groom on their wedding night.

Shen Zhixian: "?????"

He wanted to go back immediately without delay! Clean up the sect! Try to catch this little disciple who was addicted to fooling around! Assign him to growing melons in the field!

As the storyteller became engrossed in his story, his beard shook uninhibitedly up and down as he said, "....The disciple was reading a book in his room when he heard the Master call for him. The Master, with drunken, shimmering eyes…"

The more that was said, the more outrageous the scene became.

Shen Zhixian cleared his throat and rapped his fan sternly on the table. "Old Mister, can't you talk about things that are optimistic and positive, like self-improvements?"

Suddenly interrupted again, the bearded storyteller trembled with rage. He grabbed a small paperweight and threw it at Shen Zhixian, shouting angrily, "This youngster, why do you talk so much?! If you have the ability, why

don’t you come talk then?”

Shen Zhixian shifted his body slightly backward to avoid being hit. Smiling, he corrected, “These messy words are not correct. The master and disciple have a proper relationship. How can there be so many weird things going on between them? You should talk about the simple and honest relationship between the master and disciple instead, encouraging everyone to respect the master and protect the disciple. In this way, the master and disciple can work together to create a better future for the world…”

After trying to listen to something he’d been anticipating for a while, but then getting interrupted time and again, the boss couldn’t stand it anymore. His face grew heavy, and he slammed his hand loudly on the table. “Who are you? The book has nothing to do with you. Why do you have so many protests?”

Shen Zhixian coughed again, widened his smile, and said firmly, “This humble person’s name is not known in the Jianghu and is not worth mentioning. The small disciple that was spoken of in the book is a distant younger cousin of mine. I know that he really revered his master and would not want to be misunderstood in this way…”

Everyone saw his serious look and was fooled, believing that he was speaking the truth. The old storyteller was the first to regain his senses. In all his years of living, he’d seen many things. He frowned and asked, “What is your name?”

Shen Zhixian snapped open his fan and waved it by his face. He stood and took two steps forward, his appearance both confident and at ease, distinguished and accomplished. “The pair of swallows returned to their old nest, mutually beholding each other year after year. This humble person’s name is Sui Xian, similar to the character Xian for leisure, signifying the leisurely life of the Jianghu. I saw that you were discussing the people in the book; everyone knew who this pair of master and disciple are. If you don’t believe me, you can go up to Qingyun Sect to verify and see whether the disciple was willing to recognize this older cousin of his.”

Who knew where Yan Jin went? To find him, these people would have to go in search for the person first.

Shen Zhixian thought this lazily, watching the people around him with a satisfactory and contemplative look. Just his a mouth stretched into a smile, he heard the sound of a clatter, like a tea cup falling and shattering into pieces.

Who got scared?

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look, but as soon as he turned around, he saw a dark face, one that he thought would never appear here in front of him.

His heart suddenly jerked, recognizing that this was probably how it felt like to be caught like in the middle of a lie. Shen Zhixian subconsciously took a step back. Who knew that in the next moment, his wrist would be firmly grabbed, even as the young man’s tight voice sounded in his ear, “--Sui Xian?”

At this sudden, unexpected development, the crowd watched the drama unfold in stunned silence. Then, gazing at the lively scene, all kind of curious gossips took shape

Yan Jin tightened his mouth, staring at the strange face in front of him. Realizing that the man in white had every intention of shaking off his hand, he tightened his grip on the slender wrist and tightly dragged the person upstairs in silence.

With a bang, the door was knocked open.

With a bang, the door was slammed shut.

Rapid breathing sounded slightly in Shen Zhixian's ears.

Behind him was the hard door and in front of him was a young man who looked oppressive and threatening and who was still tightly clasping his

hand, holding him firmly in place against the door.

Shen Zhixian frowned, suddenly overcame with a bad feeling.

Xixi: Well, apparently I've been spelling Sui Xian as Sui Jian. The pinyin for the character can be either xian or jian, both of which essentially meant the same thing. So, I just randomly went with Jian. Sigh. So, forthwith, Sui Jian is now Sui Xian. I'll go back and fix previous chapters when I have time.

Also, it would be funny if the one who wrote those books were the two disciples who cleaned up Yan Jin's house for him in one of the earlier chapters.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 27 part2

What?

Not at all!

This seemed like a question, but it was obviously a declarative sentence, one with just the same amount of strength as Yan Jin’s handhold earlier!

Shen Zhixuan didn't know what Yan Jin was thinking. He only knew that he was now trapped in the wolf's den and couldn't escape.

He wanted to slip out but was firmly held in place by the paw of this big-tailed wolf. It wouldn’t be difficult to solve this problem, so long as he reveals his identity.

Forget it, Shen Zhixian thought, he'll continue to pretend.

He refused to reveal his identity and should have nothing to fear from Yan Jin, even though he was caught so firmly against the door.

Shen Zhixian wanted a pretext to leave and made an excuse that he had already booked a room next door and wanted to go back to rest, but he was rejected ruthlessly.

The young man stood with a sword at his waist, looking at him quietly. His eyes were as dark as a deep pond, without any emotional ripples. He tenaciously bit out the words "familiarity at first sight” and insisted that Shen Zhixian stay the night so they could talk.

Shen Zhixian: "……"

Persist, persist, persist, persist!

Talk, talk, talk, talk!

Realizing that he was unable to escape, Shen Zhixian lost his smiling expression. He gave up struggling, allowed people to send hot water up, and sat on the bed angrily. “I’m going to take a bath. Troubling you to leave for a moment.”

Yan Jin was still hesitant. Shen Zhixian merely shot him a glance, then slowly loosened his outer robe and dropped it on the floor. Next, his shoes and sock followed, revealing his naked feet.

Yan Jin’s eyes subconsciously lowered to look.

Shen Zhixian’s feet did not normally see the sun so they were white as porcelain, the skin so thin that faint veins could be seen underneath. His toes were like pearls found within the deep sea, shiny and noble.

Shen Zhixian stood and lazily took two steps. His finger rested on the ties of his inner robe, even as he shifted a pair of eyes to look askance at Jin Yan. He said in a languorous voice, “Don’t want to go?”

Yan Jin suddenly regained his senses. He looked up to see Shen Zhixian pull apart his loose neckline, revealing a small expanse of porcelain skin. He quickly turned his head and hurriedly said, as if he’d been scalded, “I...I’ll wait outside the door.”

After he said this, he rushed out the door. As he closed the door behind him, he was probably in an unstable mood, because the door slammed with a loud noise.

Watching his reaction, Shen Zhixian raised an eyebrow, finding it quite

interesting. They’re both two big men. What he had, Jin Yan also had. What was he so nervous about?

He was already so nervous and yet he dared to want to talk at night?

This small town inn naturally could not compare to Qingyun Sect. The hot water was just common hot water and had no spiritual aura.

However, when Shen Zhixian soaked in the water, he breathed a long sigh of relief.

He’d left several days after Yan Jin, and he was worried that Yan Jin would be traveling too fast and he wouldn't be able to catch up to him. As a result, he’d traveled in a hurry for the past days and hadn’t been able to rest much.

Who knew that Yan Jin would just happen to be here.

That was also good. At least, he could finally have a good rest.

The hot water relieved the body’s fatigue. Shen Zhixian's long fingers played with the water as he thought tiredly that, without spiritual power, he’d become easily tired just like an ordinary person.

A slight chirping sound came from the bed, and Shen Zhixuan immediately turned his gaze over to the little grass bud that had just emerged from his sleeve.

Shen Zhixian made a gesture for silence and Xiao Caoya stopped, feeling aggrieved. Disappointed, he flew over and unhappily sat beside the tub. Two small leaves bent down, imitating a human figure with his hands on his hips.

“Okay, okay. It was wrong of me to shove you in my sleeve. But who knew we would unexpectedly run into Yan Jin by accident?” Shen Zhixian leaned forward and whispered, “You just wait in the storage bag these next few

days. Wait until A’jin leaves before coming out.”

Xiao Caoya was even more vexed when it heard these words. It stood and jumped hard in dissatisfaction. Using a small leaf, it angrily splashed Shen Zhixian with water, issuing a short, low-pitched “Chirp!”

Shen Zhixian was suddenly splashed with water, which covered up one person and one grass bud. He helplessly said, “A’jin wants us to travel together. There’s nothing I can do…. Ah? What did you say? You want to find him?”

Shen Zhixian lowered his voice, feeling unhappy. “Why do you want to go to him? Are you the grass that I raised or that he raised?”

"Chirp! Chirp!"

Xiao Caoya was determined and shook the water droplets off, still wanting to abandon its owner to find Yan Jin. But, as soon as it tried to fly out, Shen Zhixian caught one of its small roots.

Shen Zhixian whispered, "A’jin is very poor. He has no spirit stones at all. If you follow him, then you won't have any elixirs to eat."

Xiao Caoya’s movements paused.

Shen Zhixian displayed a "sure enough" triumphant smile, but this smile didn't last long. Xiao Caoya pulled it’s thin root out from between his fingers and flew toward the windowsill.

Without looking back, he flew out the half-opened window.

Shen Zhixian: "????"

Even though it gave Shen Zhixian a little face and didn't go out directly through the front door to expose Shen Zhixian's identity, he was still furious.

This ungrateful grass bud!

All this time, who knew how many expensive elixirs it'd eaten? But now, just because of a little frustration, it wanted to abandon the master! Straight into another person’s arms!

Shen Zhixian, who’d been cast aside, treated the water as if it was Yan Jin. The calmer his face was, the more vigorous he became. The sound of water splashing spread out through the room, which wasn’t soundproofed very well, and fell into Yan Jin’s ears.

Yan Jin stood by the door with a sword in his hand, seeming to be neither walking nor waiting. He listened to the sound of the water and couldn't help remembering Shen Zhixian’s bare feet...the gap between his inner robe, revealing a pair of slender legs…

His ears suddenly became very hot, and he uncomfortably raised his hand to touch his lips. He tightened his mouth and began to meditate in his heart.

By the time Shen Zhixian finished slowly bathing, it had already grown late. Due to the incident with the storyteller, he’d not eaten at all this evening and was a bit hungry. He was about to ask that the water be taken down and for food to be delivered when the door opened. Yan Jin came in with a three-tier snack box.

The delicious aroma wafted up to his nose in an instant.

As he lazily on his shoes, Shen Zhixian’s annoyance at being banished into the wolf’s den finally dissipated a little.

Since he’d just finished bathing, his hair was still wet and his cheeks were flushed red by the heat. His clothes were carelessly thrown on, his outer coat just loosely covering his inner robe. The whole picture exuded an uninhibited, indolent taste.

He smelled the food and his Adam apple bobbed slightly. A few drops of

water silently slid down into his collar, leaving moist trails along his fair skin.

Yan Jin saw it all and felt the tips of his ears that had just calmed down flushed hotly again. He hurriedly lowered his head and laid out the food on the table.

Xiao Caoya was sitting on Yan Jin’s shoulder, chirping. Shen Zhixian saw it and became angry all over again. Resisting the urge to pull it down, he pretended to look at it curiously. “What is this?”

Yan Jin placed a bowl of clean, white rice in front of Shen Zhixian. After putting a pair of wooden chopsticks on top of the rim, he said, “It’s a little grass bud that my master is raising.”

He retracted his hand and sat down, without putting any tableware in front of him. Who was sitting opposite him, he knew full well. Although he didn't know what Shen Zhixian was planning, he was still a bit uncomfortable when he thought about eating at the same table with Shen Zhixian.

He still had spiritual power so it was fine even if he didn’t eat. However, Master had no spiritual power and could not abstain from eating. This was crucial.

Unfortunately, this little place didn’t have the best food. Certainly not remotely close to the type of food that Master was used to eating. Yan Jin wasn’t sure if Master would eat it.

Shen Zhixian didn’t know Yan Jin’s thoughts. He only stared at Xiao Caoya for a long time. Finally, he slowly said, “This grass bud looks very stupid.”

Yan Jin: "..."

Xiao Caoya: "..…… "

Xiao Caoya chirped and immediately jumped up to fight. Yan Jin quickly caught him in the palm of his hands and lightly coughed.

It was the first time that Xiao Caoya was taken into the palm of Yan Jin’s hands. It immediately relaxed and began to twist affectionately in Yan Jin’s palm, shyly trembling under his fingertips.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

He grew even more angry and withdrew his gaze. If his eyes didn’t see, his heart wouldn’t feel so vexed.

Three dishes and one soup on the table were quite hearty and smelled good. Shen Zhixian was hungry and saw that Yan Jin didn’t eat but he was too lazy to care. He ate a little from a few dishes and slowly finished his small bowl of rice. Then he gracefully laid down his chopsticks and wiped his mouth with a handkerchief.

Yan Jin felt a little relieved when he saw that Shen Zhixian had eaten about the same amount of food as usual, and then he became a little worried.

Master always eat so little. No wonder he was so thin...

As he was thinking this, he heard Shen Zhixian, who was sipping tea, politely asked him, “What should I call you?”

He acted like they were strangers who just happened to meet each other by chance.

"..." Yan Jin was silent for a moment, then he said, "Sui Xian Gege."

“Cough, cough--” Shen Zhixian almost sprayed out the tea in his mouth.

Yan Jin stood up silently and walked over to pat his back in a familiar way, soothing him.

In the early days, Shen Zhixian used to pretend to be sick and coughed a lot. As a result, he'd become very accustomed to Yan Jin's action. So, even though he'd changed his identity on the surface, he subconsciously accepted Yan Jin's movements and didn't think anything was wrong with it. After coughing for a while, he calmed down. His cheeks were slightly red, and he gasped a bit before asking in a hoarse voice, "What did you call me?"

Yan Jin refilled the teacup in front of Shen Zhixian and waited until he finished drinking before saying, "My name is Yan Jin. I'm the disciple in the book, your distant cousin. I should call you…"

He paused and said seriously, "Sui Xian Gege?"

Shen Zhixian:" ????? "

Shen Zhixian was called "gege" twice in a row and felt that his old face was a little bit lost. He forced his face to remain calm even though he was internally roaring. As he opened his mouth to speak, Yan Jin added, "Is this right? I had a very solitary childhood and had never called anyone older brother before. I'm also not sure what to call you…"

His face had some doubts, and when a pair of dark eyes looked over, there was a hint of confusion and helplessness within the depths of those eyes.

Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered the little Yan Jin from a few years ago, who'd been lonely and emaciated and unable to fight back. Suddenly, he softened. Taking his folding fan in hand, he opened it and half-covered his face to conceal the unnaturalness of it as he said, "En, what brother? There's no need to call me gege. Just….call my name."

Yan Jin seem a little regretful. He hesitated for a moment before saying, "Ok."

After responding with "Ok," he called, "Sui Xian."

Listening to him, Shen Zhixian somehow felt that there was a hint of nostalgia and enthusiasm in the “Sui Xian,” sounding unusually warm and...

He remembered his previous guess and snapped his folding fan shut, before he murmured as soft “En.”

He felt a little unhappy.

Was the “Sui Xian” that Yan Jin had met before so worthy in his memory? Such that he couldn’t help transferring the sentiment onto someone with the same name?

So, remembering the “Sui Xian,” why didn’t he follow him, then?

The unhappy Shen Zhixian decided to go to bed early tonight, refusing to talk anymore to Yan Jin and Xiao Caoya.

After all, he was just an ordinary person now!

Xixi: Haha. I thought YJ was just teasing SZX with the whole “gege” thing, but he was serious. He can be so surprisingly innocent. And, SZX got jealous of "Sui Xian." Not to mention the slight sexual tension….I love it!

You all probably know what “gege” means but, if not, then it means older brother. But, it also carries an intimate connotation and can be used as a term of affection.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 27.1

In the silent room, the two people stood incredibly close to each other.

Shen Zhixian was in a completely oppressed position, like a cat forced into a corner with nowhere to escape.

And could only be bullied.

Shen Zhixian considered his combat ability and then evaluated Yan Jin's. The conclusion was terrifying. Therefore, he could only use softness to conquer strength. Before going out, he'd asked Fourth Elder to seal many of his spiritual acupoints. This would ensure that his heart affliction would not suddenly break out.

At this moment, he was nothing more than a flower vase. Aside from his sword and his brain, he had not an ounce of spiritual force within him.

Yan Jin gazed at him intently, carefully scrutinizing his face with heated eyes.

Shen Zhixian was not afraid that Yan Jin would recognize him. He'd deliberately used all kinds of methods to carefully disguise himself, ensuring that even people with higher abilities than Yan Jin would not be able to recognize him. Therefore, he didn't believe for a moment that Yan Jin would be able to recognize him

So then, what was Yan Jin being so intense about?

The vague thought quickly flashed through his mind before he, once again, turned his attention to his awkward position. He was not a good, young lady and Yan Jin was not an overbearing bully, so why were their bodies in this kind of position?!

He twisted his wrist, trying to free himself. This time, Yan Jin relaxed his grip slightly, though he didn't let go. But, at least he lowered their hands so that Shen Zhixian's hand was no longer pressed to the door.

Shen Zhixian cleared his throat. Just to be on the safe side, he even changed the silky texture of his clear and cold voice into something that leaned more toward fresh and clean. "You…"

"You ..."

They both spoke at the same time. Shen Zhixian paused and raised his chin slightly to indicate that the other party should speak first.

Yan Jin didn't decline. When he spoke, his voice was tight and rough, as if he hadn't drank water for three days. Bit by bit, his words became very clear. "You...In the end, who are you?"

"Huh?" Shen Zhixian stared blankly, unable to understand.

He dared to guarantee that Yan Jin had not recognized him. After all, his appearance, name, and voice were all very well disguised. Furthermore, if Yan Jin recognized him as his master, then he surely wouldn't have responded this way.

Not hearing a response, Yan Jin stepped closer so that his hot chest was nearly pressed against Shen Zhixian. The heat of his breath brushed across Shen Zhixian's cheek as he said, "--Sui Xian?"

"Ai!" Shen Zhixia responded subconsciously. Afterward, he felt the powerful grip on his wrist tighten. His regained his senses and a hint of doubt rose from within his heart. Yan Jin...was reacting to this name?

Yan Jin knew this name?

It didn’t make sense. The name was only used by the original teenage Shen Zhixian when he went out to practice. At that time, Yan Jin should still be small and had not yet joined the sect. Shen Zhixian combed through the original’s memory but was unable to find any memories relating to any prior meeting between the original Shen Zhixian and little Yan Jin.

In Qingyun Sect, aside from his master, no one knew the name Sui Xian, not even Song Ming. Therefore, there was no way Yan Jin would have known this name.

Shen Zhixian’s thoughts took a few quick turns, and he finally determined that Yan Jin must have met someone with the same name in the past. So, he let go of the matter in his heart and smiled, saying, “I haven’t done anything bad. Why don’t we sit down and talk?”

Yan Jin turned a deaf ear to his words. He repeated his original question with unceasingly intensity, “Who the hell are you?”

This crabby person.

Yan Jin was only holding on to one of Shen Zhixian’s hands. He shook his other hand calmly, causing his sleeve to sway. Then, he took a breath and said quietly, “My name is Sui Xian. I came from an unnamed town at the base of Zixu Mountain. I’m just an ordinary idler with nothing to do so I decided to walk around to see the world. It can be considered as wanting to gain experience.”

He spoke with great earnesty, but Yan Jin had already lost interest in his words. He sent a strand of spiritual power into Shen Zhixian’s body, gently and silently searching.

If he were an ordinary person, Shen Zhixian would not have even noticed such a small strand of spiritual power. However, Shen Zhixian was not an ordinary person; he was very familiar with spiritual force. Even if his spiritual acupoints were sealed, his body was sensitive enough to still

recognize it. Therefore, once Yan Jin’s spiritual power entered his body, he immediately felt it.

But, he couldn’t resist it, nor could he react to it.

Shen Zhixian simply pretended not to notice it. He stood innocently, allowing Yan Jin to investigate to his heart’s content, knowing that he wouldn’t be able to detect anything.

Yan Jin didn’t do too much, merely allowing the silky strand of his spiritual force to search the person’s body for a bit before withdrawing. He acknowledged that this man dressed in white whose name was Sui Xian was empty of spiritual qi, seeming to be just an ordinary person. There was no trace of spiritual power to be found.

None at all.

But ...

The point of contact where his hand was wrapped around the other party’s wrist began to grow hot.

It was like a gradual fire burning the palm of his hand. Within the depths of his spiritual sea, the binding contract that had just been formed finally awakened after more than half a month of silence.

It felt like a parched piece of land that had finally been awashed with sweet rain after a long drought. Or, like a hungry little hedgehog that had finally found a forest of fruits.

Yan Jin’s heart settled, and he inhaled softly. The previous oppressive tension finally eased, but his words were still sharp, even as he returned to his ordinary calm. “You have no spiritual power so why did you come to this border of the immortal cultivator’s land?

For ordinary people, it was enough to travel the mortal world that was full of countless great rivers and mountains. So, why come to this land of immortal cultivators?

He would inevitably be like a small fish caught up in the fight between immortal cultivators, meeting only disaster. There was no rational reason to come.

Shen “Ordinary Person” Zhixian sincerely said, “Life is short, comprising of just several decades of life. How can I remain stagnant due to fear and allow it to stop me? Although I’m unable to cultivate because of my ignorance, I’ve yearned for it for a long time. Now that I finally had the chance, I will naturally have to come and see.”

Yan Jin declined to comment and only glanced at him. Then, he asked, “Just now, downstairs, I wasn’t listening carefully. Who was the disciple in that book?”

Shen Zhixian : "..."

If he knew that Yan Jin was present, he wouldn’t have said that he was Yan Jin’s distant cousin! Wasn’t this just like asking to be taken apart at the scene!

Then again, how long had it been since Yan Jin left? Was he a hedgehog degenerating into a snail? Why was he still hanging around here?!

Shen Zhixian vaguely talked nonsense. “Just...that I’m that one of that Master’s disciple’s...um, his distant cousin, very very distant. The kind of distant that is a million miles away.”

Look at him. He was really clever. He’d not once mentioned Yan Jin’s name so even if Yan Jin pursued the matter, he could still forcibly justify his claim. Anyway, Yan Jin wasn’t the only disciple under that “Master.” Other ordinary little disciples could still be considered, though barely.

Shen Zhixian curbed his unease and thought that, when this was over, he

would immediately slip away and not allow Yan Jin to grab even one piece of hair as evidence of wrongdoing.

He had allowed Yan Jin out to practice this time because this was near the time that Yan Jin was supposed to have come across the demon fish scale. Therefore, he wanted to see if he himself could break into the secret place where the scale was hidden.

The reason why he didn't want to reveal his identity, why he had changed his face and name, was because, on the one hand, he'd been stuck for a long time in one place and wanted to explore the Jianghu and, on the other hand, he was afraid that the bad guy, Yan Jin, would suddenly change his mind one day and still return to exact vengeance.

Although it could be said that since the two of them had entered into a contract, there was nothing to fear. But, it was still based on a fragment of a contract...To be honest, Shen Zhixian was not very convinced.

He was afraid that it might turn out to be a false contract. If Yan Jin suddenly blackened, who knew if this piece of contract could stop him. One must not forget that Yan Jin was still the protagonist!

This protagonist halo, who could stand against it?!

Shen Zhixian raised his eyes to stealthily look at Yan Jin's expression. His expression looked normal, as if he believed Shen Zhixian's nonsense. Seeing this, Shen Zhixian decided to leave quickly. He pretended to shake his hand casually and said, "Never mind. You can let of my hand now."

Yan Jin heard his words and let go.

Shen Zhixuan was relieved, and consciously wanted to escape from the wolf's mouth. In a happy mood, he cupped his hands in salute without any constraint, said goodbye, and turned to open the door.

But who knew that just when he'd managed to open a seam in the door, a hand would catch the door again, pushing it closed.

Yan Jin's calm and unhurried voice came from behind him. "Wait."

Shen Zhixian’s heart jerked.

The calm and steady voice continued, “Since we seem to be familiar at first sight, it’s better to stay together. It can be considered as us mutually taking care of each other.” He paused and asked in a meaningful tone, “What do you think?”

Xixi: SZX is funny. Just a heads up, this is a long, long chapter (15-18 pages long) so it'll be broken into 3-4 parts.

A flower vase = something that looks good but has no substance.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 27.3

There was only one bed. Naturally, Yan Jin won’t grab it, leaving it to Shen Zhixian. In his heart, he wondered why Shen Zhixian suddenly became unhappy, but he didn't ask. He silently blew out the candle for Shen Zhixian and went to meditate on the soft couch with Xiao Caoya.

Moonlight poured in through the half-opened window, carrying with it a slight, cool breeze.

It was already deep into the night. Xiao Caoya was sleeping soundly on the windowsill, bathing in the moonlight. Shen Zhixian was on the bed. His breathing was steady, indicating that he was clearly asleep.

Yan Jin eyes's opened, displaying a clear intensity. He tilted his head in the direction of the bed and walked silently toward it.

Shen Zhixian was probably still pretending to see him as a “stranger” so, tonight, his sleeping posture was very proper. The lining of his clothes were neat and meticulous. He was lying on his back with the brocade comforter placed on his lower abdomen and his hands folded over it. The position gave him a very serious appearance.

Yan Jin stared at him for a long time.

Those years in Qingyun Sect, when he was living next to Shen Zhixian, he’d had the good fortune to see Shen Zhixian’s sleeping posture many times, which was as unrestrained and uninhibited as his sword skills.

The comforter was about to fall to the ground, and the pillow was pushed

into a crooked position. Shen Zhixian turned soundly on his side, his long, black hair spread out like ink behind him.

Thinking that Xiao Caoya was bothering him, he angrily rolled under comforter and turned back over, tiredly and softly murmuring, “Don’t be noisy.”

Yan Jin glanced down, not knowing what Shen Zhixian was thinking.

The wind blew a strand of hair against his face, making Shen Zhixian felt very uncomfortable. Still asleep, he raised his hand and pushed it back a few times.

But, the strand of hair was very stubborn. The moment Shen Zhixian’s hand dropped back, it started to make trouble again under the instigation of the wind.

Shen Zhixian murmured something incomprehensible.

Yan Jin's eyes softened unconsciously, not even realizing that he had a small smile on his lips.

He gently fixed the strand of hair for Shen Zhixian before moving his eyes to Shen Zhixuan's wrist.

Because he’d just tried to push back the errant strand of hair, Shen Zhixian’s hand lay casually on the bed, fingers slightly curled.

Yan Jin crouched down and quietly took Shen Zhixian’s hand.

His hands were ice-cold all the time, as if they had never been warmed. Yan Jin gently turned it over and took his pulse.

When Yan Jin left, Shen Zhixuan's body was still very weak. Although he seemed fine right now, Yan Jin dared not take it lightly.

Fortunately, his pulse was smooth and powerful.

Yan Jin was slightly relieved and couldn't help but think more.

When he saw him earlier, Master didn’t seem to be very angry. Did he...forgive him? Why did the Master suddenly change his identity? And still happened to use this name?

He thought wildly and lowered his gaze. He saw that Shen Zhixian's wrist no longer had the string of jade beads that he used to wear.

He assumed that since Shen Zhixian had disguised his identity, he probably took it off.

On the white wrist, there was a place that was marked with a very different color. Without the jade beads blocking it, the scars on Shen Zhixian's wrist was clearly visible to Yan Jin's eyes.

Yan Jin had briefly seen the scar before. But, this was the first time that he was able to see it completely. It was an irregular wound, which clearly indicated that it was not made with a knife nor a sword. It stretched across the snow-white wrist, and when touched, appeared to be slightly raised.

Yan Jin carefully studied the scar, realizing that it seemed to have been...caused by repeated biting.

How can someone with Master's identity have such a wound?

Yan Jin's heart gradually began to doubt. Somehow, he had an intuition that this scar might have less to do with Shen Zhixian and had something more to do with…

Sui Xian.

Sui Xian, ah.

He mulled over the name repeatedly in his heart. In the end, this name tasted a little sweet, a little sour, and a little joyful and sad.

The combination of emotions were so complicated, making it difficult to untangle.

In fact, many of his memories were chaotic. Those past events seemed to be crushed and broken down and interlaced with the timeline of his life, leaving only small fragments embedded in his mind.

He no longer remembered why he must find this person. He only knew that there was an insatiable obsession that repeatedly appeared in his mind. His life seemed incomplete and it was as if only until he found Sui Xian and swallowed him into his stomach, ingesting his flesh and blood, could he be considered complete.

Forcibly searching for memories made his head start to ache. Yan Jin's hold inadvertently tightened and Shen Zhixian noticed the discomfort. Still sleeping, he shifted anxiously, frowning.

The hand holding Shen Zhixian's wrist felt as if it'd been scorched by fire, and the binding contract within his spiritual sea issued a warning, using this sting to remind him not to harm this person.

Yan Jin suddenly returned to his senses, immediately realizing the terrible thoughts that had insidiously entered his mind. His mouth tightened, eyes clearly struggling as, within its depths, a hint of red quietly flickered into life.

Former Sect Leader Wen's voice saying, "My disciple, Sui Xian."

Master had followed with a phrase, saying to always see each other year after year.

In fact, there was no need to look for any further proof. The most instinctual and most direct response in his heart had already told him the truth. But, he couldn't help but tremble with trepidation, fearing that everything in front of him was just an illusion, making him deadly afraid to touch.

The headache seemed to burst in his head, the pain sharp enough to cut him

in two. Yan Jin put up with the pain and gently lowered Shen Zhixian's hand. He stood up and took two steps backward.

Master.

Sui Xian.

As he turned away, Yan Jin couldn't help but turn to look back one more time. The clean and handsome man on the bed slept soundly. When he was awake, he would be indolent and unconstrained. But, when he was asleep, there would be a gentleness between his eyebrows.

Like the full moon on a dark night, emitting the brightest and most beautiful moonlight.

……

Shen Zhixian had become like an ordinary person. After rushing on the road these past few days, he was really exhausted. Although he wanted to guard against Yan Jin, he couldn't help but feel upset and ended up falling asleep at night. He had no clue about what had happened in the middle of the night.

He just felt that his wrist seemed to be a little sore. But, it was only momentary.

He turned his hand around in confusion. Looking at it, it was only a little bit red, but there seemed to be nothing wrong with it.

He concluded that he must have fallen asleep on his hand; it wouldn't be the first time. As a result, he pushed the confusion away and no longer thought about it.

Since Yan Jin wanted to travel with him, and Shen Zhixian couldn't refused, he only calmly asked, "Where to?"

He had no destination himself. In fact, he'd intended to secretly follow Yan

Jin and see if he could locate the mysterious secret realm that housed the inverse demon fish scale.

Since they were traveling together, as long as he was careful not to reveal his identity...it shouldn't be too big of a problem.

Maybe he could even become "good brothers" with Yan Jin. Perhaps, after Yan Jin found the scale, he would consider their brotherhood and give him a piece of the scale.

Shen Zhixian, who was totally unaware that his disguise had been completely seen through, thought optimistically.

Yan Jin actually also didn't have a clear destination in mind. But, he couldn't bear Shen Zhixian looking at him for so long so he hesitantly said a direction. "That….go south."

Shen Zhixian nodded in agreement.

Shen Zhixian had enough of hard traveling for the past two days and decided to buy a comfortable riding mount. Not far from this town, there was a place that specialized in various mounts so he decided to stop by there and take a look.

Yan Jin, of course, had no objection and, along with Xiao Caoya, followed him silently.

Before they left the town for good, Shen Zhixian suddenly thought of something. He went back to find a bookstore and left Yan Jin to wait outside, leaving behind the statement that he wanted to buy something himself.

Yan Jin initially wanted to follow but stopped when Shen Zhixian glanced at him.

Fortunately, Shen Zhixian only went in for a short while and soon came out. When he came out, his hands were empty and his expression looked subtly

self-satisfied.

Yan Jin saw his expression and only quietly asked, “You bought something?”

Hearing him ask, Shen Zhixian’s expression turned a bit weird. He shook his head after a while, saying, “That boss was ruthless and completely lacking in conscience so I didn’t buy anything. Let’s go.”

Shen Zhixian took the lead and walked forward. Yan Jin turned back to look at the bookstore. He had a good ear so he heard the bookstore owner muttering.

“Aiya. This set of books was sold, making me so much money….But, I won’t feel bad. I could just go back and listen a few more times to that storyteller.”

Yan Jin lowered his eyes and strode forward to follow.

Xixi: Haha...SZX, totally exposed.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 27.4

The place that bought and sold mount was very lively. There were all kinds of mounts, with fairy cranes and civet cats being the most common. There were also docile spiritual rabbits and flying horses, spiritual tigers and snakes, and even turtles and flying fish.

Shen Zhixian fancied a flying fish. The flying fish, as its name suggested, was a fish that could fly in the air. It had a thick and broad back with a normal sized surface perfect for seating two or three people.

The man selling mounts vigorously called, “Come, come, buy these! They’re super fast, super stable, and can fly. On your journey, you can look at the scenery below and see how lively it is...The most important thing is that they’re safe! I’ve sold many flying fishes for so many years, and I haven’t heard of a fall yet!”

Shen Zhixian’s heartbeat picked up. “Can ordinary people sit?”

Having his words interrupted, the seller froze. He looked at Shen Zhixian up and down, seizing him up, before he realized. “Ah, I thought you were a disciple from a big sect who came out to gain experience. You look very handsome… You can, you can! My flying fishes are very well-behaved and obedient. Ordinary people definitely can sit! "

Flying fishes will grow bigger when needed. Normally, they would remain shrank down to a fist sized mini-fish inside a water orb. The seller groped about and retrieved a water orb with a sea blue flying fish inside. He said “Hey!” and tossed the water orb up, shouting, “Come out!”

The flying fish broke through the water orb and suddenly inflated, becoming large. It floated neatly beside Shen Zhixian, and the two big eyes on it’s flat face turned slowly, looking...rather cute.

Shen Zhixian touched its head and the flying fish spit out a bunch of small bubbles at him, which popped against his hand. The two long whiskers on the sides of its face curled up quietly to touch Shen Zhixian’s hand before retracting shyly.

Shen Zhixian watched it happily and felt for his bag of spirit stones, boldly declaring, “I’ll buy it!”

The boss made a big business transaction as soon as it opened today and couldn’t stop laughing, unable to conceal his happiness. After all, the price of flying fish was not low! He looked at this straightforward customer and repeatedly said, “Good, good. Magnanimous guest, I’ll throw in a plush blanket! The sky is high and it can get windy. What else does the customer need?”

Shen Zhixian looked at Yan Jin, knowing that he probably had little money. He said, "What do you want to buy? Just choose it."

The boss looked at Yan Jin enthusiastically, but Yan Jin shook his head and calmly said, "It’s not safe for you to sit alone on the flying fish. I'll sit with you."

The boss’s expression quickly became crestfallen.

Shen Zhixian thought about it and felt that it made sense, so he didn’t force it. He was fairly confident that he wouldn’t meet with any trouble. However, he knew that he couldn’t use spiritual power so he’d brought a lot of things for protection, just in case.

Half an hour later, the two of them were sitting on the flying fish and heading south.

The reason why Shen Zhixian chose the flying fish was because he wanted

to experience what an aircraft would be like in an immortal cultivating world. After all, when flying on a modern airplane and looking at the clouds through the window, there was always a sense of surrealism.

Half a quarter of an hour after climbing on to the flying fish, the originally spirited and enthusiastic Shen Zhixian whole-heartedly regretted it.

Flying--too--high--wind--very--strong--ah!

Shen Zhixian looked down and his long-hidden fear of heights suddenly reared it's ugly head. In truth, his fear of heights was not very serious and would be fine so long as he was flying in an airplane or climbing a mountain with railing, and so on. As long as he knew there was something in place to prevent his fall, he wouldn’t be afraid.

But now...

He was terrified of the empty open space all around. There was nothing to hold on to should he fall.

Shen Zhixian was scared and a little regretful. He inched closer to Yan Jin, eyes affixed to the distance, pretending to be perfectly calm.

Yan Jin was keenly aware of the change in his state of mind and, after thinking about it, he snapped his fingers. A faint pop sounded and suddenly, a dome-like barrier covered the fish from corner to corner.

The cold wind immediately disappeared. Shen Zhixian was surprised for a moment, then he subconsciously turned to look at Yan Jin and found that, at some point in time, Yan Jin had moved closer to his side, sitting in a protective posture next to him, within easy reach.

As long as he turned his head and raised his hand, he would be able to touch him.

They were too close, making Shen Zhixian felt a little uncomfortable. He

coughed slightly, and when Yan Jin looked at him, his piercing gaze seemed to be acutely aware of Shen Zhixian’s fear. He said, “Don’t be afraid”

The words came out in a gentle, soothing tone.

Shen Zhixian suddenly felt that his lofty image of a elder--well, an elder cousin--had completely shattered.

He coughed again and decided to create the image of a good older cousin who cares for his junior cousin. He asked with a smile, “How have you been in recent years?”

Yan Jin looked at him silently for a moment, unable to understand what he was doing. But, since Master asked, he also truthfully said, “Very good. Master treats me very well. Just that…”

Shen Zhixian’s smile grew stiff. He suddenly didn’t want to listen to the second half of Yan Jin’s statement. However, Yan Jin didn’t give him an opportunity to interrupt and smoothly went on with the rest of his words.

“It’s just that Master is not well. But, he doesn’t like to drink medicine. He always adds a lot of sugar when drinking elixir. Fourth Elder said that this is not good and that it would destroy the medicine. But, Master always added it secretly. I also tried to advise against it but…”

Shen Zhixian:" ..... "

Shen Zhixian:" ???? "

Just talk about yourself. Who permitted you to secretly roast your Master instead?!!!

Those elixirs were so unpleasant to drink and yet, they still wouldn’t allow him to even add sugar in secrecy!!!

Shen Zhixian tried his best to control his hand so it wouldn’t inadvertently knock on the villain’s head. He turned angrily to look at the scenery,

unwilling to talk to Yan Jin anymore.

There was now a barrier all around him so he felt safe, and his fear of heights completely retreated.

Yan Jin looked at Shen Zhixian’s dark head, pursed his lips, and a slight smile flickered across his eyes.

.....

They flew south the whole day and didn’t see many people, only mountain after mountain.

Fortunately, this morning, Shen Zhixian deliberately bought two storage bag, one for Yan Jin and one for himself.

The one for Yan Jin was, of course, a special immortal cultivator’s storage bag, which could hold many things and store food for a short period of time. The one he bought for himself was a storage bag for ordinary people. Although it wasn’t able to store much, at least it could be opened without using spiritual power.

He originally had a high-quality storage bag filled with all kinds of things that ordinary people wouldn’t have. However, now that Yan Jin was traveling with him, he was not willing to use it.

He could only buy an ordinary one for himself.

Yan Jin took out a pastry they’d bought in the morning, dipped it in a little bit of water, and warmed it with a touch of spiritual power before handing it over to Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian took two bites and stopped eating.

Yan Jin held the snack and asked in a low voice, “Eat a bit more?”

Shen Zhixian shook his head and refused. The pastry was not very delicate.

After taking two bites, he'd grown tired of it. He preferred to eat the candied fruits, which were quite delicious .

Yan Jin pursed his lips and put the pastry away.

After eating delicious food, Shen Zhixuan was in a good mood. Since the road was long, it was not troublesome that they were both sitting next to each other. He once again began to talk.

This time, he deliberately avoided any topics regarding their identity and instead, idly talked about funny things he’d heard or witnessed in the past. Anyway, before he’d transmigrated into this book, he used to travel a lot, filling his stomach with the sights and sounds of the world. As a result, Yan Jin’s attention was transfixed as he listened.

Probably without the constraint of his identity within Qingyun Sect, without his fear of the high altitudes, and with his eyes opened to the clear sky, his mind also widened. It caused Shen Zhixian to revert back into his old profession. He clapped and sang:

"A young man drunkenly singing on a horse, outside where the clouds and rivers and mountains met. A scattering of aged, elegant letters upon a platform desk, accompanied by wine and the sinking moon. The deep, tranquil moonlight radiantly overlooking the childe resting his head lazily on a calm night boat, spilling out ash-gray smoke into the stars and trailing along a vast river.”

He sang for a while, comfortable and relaxed. Finally, he squinted his eyes and turned back to smile at Yan Jin. He said, “This scenery is infinitely good. I can't help it so don't mind it."

Yan Jin shook his head. There was a gleam in his eyes, which flickered like the brightest stars against the backdrop a night sky.

They flew all the way like this into the late evening. Finally, the flying fish descended and took them to a small town.

The small town looked tiny and wasn’t as lively as the few towns near Qingyun Sect. Because it was getting dark, everyone was sitting at home for dinner and there were very few people still lingering on the streets.

Shen Zhixian held the flying fish, which had become smaller, while Yan Jin carried Xiao Caoya on his shoulder. The two of them walked together, planning to rest here for the night.

But who knew that when they just walked into the long street, a childish "daddy" suddenly rang out. Out of nowhere, a four to five year old child rushed over, his voluminous body full of strength.

He hugged Shen Zhixian's leg, raised his head, and shouted, "Daddy."

Shen Zhixian froze for a moment, unable to respond. But, Yan Jin looked unexpectedly calm as he softly said, "So it turns out that Sui Xian already has a child?”

Xixi: The lyrics that SZX was singing was from an ancient-style song that, if translated literally, is called "Hearsay" by HITA and Audio Monster, both of whom were supposedly pretty well known in the Chinese ancient style circle. I probably butchered the poetic lyrics, so my apologies for any inaccuracy. Between researching and figuratively scratching my head in confusion as I tried to make sense of the seemingly jumbled, descriptive phrases, this tiny paragraph almost took me an hour to translate. (ʘ ʘ') In hindsight, it probably wasn’t worth it, but I wanted to put in my best effort. Here’s the < link > to the song if you want to listen to it… ¯_( )_/¯

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 28

The child that was not tall enough to reach his waist looked up with a chubby face, childishly calling “Daddy” again and again.

His cries had shocked Shen Zhixian senseless, to the point that he feared he had somehow bred this little person back when he was still young and inexperienced.

Fortunately, Yan Jin’s “Sui Xian” had startled him back to his senses.

The little guy was still talking. Shen Zhixian raised his hand to rub his eyebrows. Then, he bent down half anxiously and rubbed the little guy's fluffy head. "Ok, don’t shout."

He hadn't coaxed anyone before, except Little Yan Jin. This kid was still a child, while Yan Jin was already a youth at that time. Now that he’d grown up, except for the occasional nagging, Shen Zhixian didn't have to worry about trivial matters.

The little guy stared at him with watery eyes, which looked as if they'd been coated with a layer of mist. His fleshy little hands held on to Shen Zhixian's sleeves, unwilling to let go.

Shen Zhixian was at a loss for a while. Finally, he awkwardly tried to coax the child, “You mustn’t call me daddy. I’m not your daddy. The sky’s already dark so why are you still out playing? Do you know where I can send you back?”

Out of these words, there were none that would actually coax a child.

As Yan Jin silently listened to him, he suddenly realized that, in those past years, when Master had given him all kinds of good food and magical treasures, he probably expended a lot of thoughts to do so.

Sure enough, the little guy didn’t hear the answer he wanted and began to cry loudly, calling “daddy.” He cried and cried until he began to hiccup.

Shen Zhixian was protected from a face full of tears by the sleeves of his garment. He took a deep breath, even as his head began to throb in pain. He was stiff and helpless and could only continue to dully say, “Don’t cry.”

He wanted to ask Yan Jin to help him, but Yan Jin only stood beside him silently, with absolutely no intention to speak. This terrible plight drove Shen Zhixian near tears. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore and lifted the kid up into his arms.

The little guy was startled, and reached out with chubby hands to hold Shen Zhixuan's neck. His cries stopped suddenly. His face flushed red, and he seemed to be holding his breath.

Shen Zhixian held him with one hand and patted his back with the other. The little boy sucked in a breath and began to hiccup, as if finally understanding. He rubbed his fluffy head intimately against the side of Shen Zhixian’s jaw.

Yan Jin's originally calm and placid expression shifted slightly. A pair of eyes looked intensely at the little guy, whose eyes quivered at he looked back. His hold around Shen Zhixian’s neck tightened. “Daddy.”

Seeing that the little guy had stopped crying, Shen Zhixian was relieved. He no longer cared about being called “daddy” and whispered, “At last, he’s finally quiet….”

He noticed that although the child was crying, his clothes were neat and tidy, indicating that he must have been naughty and ran out while the adults were busy. Shen Zhixian told Yan Jin, "Let’s go and see who lost a child."

After he said this, he held the little guy and took a few steps forward. When he didn’t hear the sound of Yan Jin following, he stopped and looked back, only to see Yan Jin looking at him thoughtfully. “You seemed to be very skilled at holding a young child.”

Shen Zhixian didn’t pay attention to his words and merely wanted to boast. As he walked forward, he said, “It’s not difficult to hold a child. I’ve done it before. I used to…”

He suddenly stopped in the middle of the sentence, stuck. His footsteps halted.

When Yan Jin caught up to him in two to three steps, he saw that Shen Zhixian’s brows were furrowed, a confused expression on his face. “But I haven’t held a child before…?”

Children who were four to five years old loved to cry and be noisy. Shen Zhixian was most afraid of their tears and their noisiness. Whenever he sees a young child approach, he would quickly run away.

But, somehow, children were very attracted to him and were always chasing after him. He could only wretchedly run away, much less even think of taking the initiative to hug or carry them.

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look at the little guy he was holding in his arms. The little guy smiled at him, and a little snot bubble came out.

The way he picked up the child was just too smooth.

Most children were fragile. People who’d never held a child before would usually hesitate first. However, he just thought about it and then did it. His hands seemed to carry the memories, knowing how to hold comfortably.

Probably this was also...talent?

This was not an important event. Shen Zhixian only wondered for a

moment and left it behind. He was about to speak to Yan Jin when a screeched sounded. "Qiuqiu!"

Because she ran too fast, the woman was heavy with sweat. She turned around the street corner and saw her lost son at once. She immediately ran over, anxiously shouting, “Qiuqiu!”

The woman ran so fast that she left a shoe behind, but she didn’t seem to notice it.

The little guy heard the familiar voice and childishly yelled "Mama.” He loosened his hold on Shen Zhixian’s neck and turned to greet her enthusiastically.

Shen Zhixian hurried forward a few steps and hastily pushed the little guy back into the woman's arms, feeling relieved.

The woman was also relieved and poked at the little guy's head in anger, not willing to use any strength. The little guy just thought that his mama was playing with him. He giggled and the chubby little hand pointed at Shen Zhixian. "Daddy, Daddy!"

Shen Zhixian leaned slightly to the side, avoiding his finger, so as not to disrespecting and take advantage of the woman.

Seeing his actions, the woman bowed her knees slightly in gratitude. "Thank you, sir. My child is naughty and created trouble for you."

Shen Zhixian said, "No problem." The woman thanked him again and turned around to go.

Seeing this, the little guy's mouth flattened, and he immediately began to cry again and again, crying even more miserably.

The woman holding him tried patting him on the back but even that didn’t seem to work. He only cried louder.

The woman panicked and called him nervously: "Qiuqiu? Qiuqiu! Wake up quickly and look at Mama! Mama's here!"

The child was clearly awake and crying, but the woman constantly shouted for him to "wake up.” When the little guy looked at him, still crying, Shen Zhixian found that his eyes had begun to look empty.

No, this couldn’t merely be because the boy was just "naughty.” Shen Zhixian frowned and turned to look at Yan Jin. Yan Jin also noticed that something was wrong. As they were just about to step forward to take a look, a soft female voice came from behind them. “Oh, Auntie. This child...I'm afraid he’d lost his soul. "

Shen Zhixian looked back, realizing he didn’t know when a tall woman had come up to them from behind. She walked gently and elegantly toward them, wearing a blue dress with a xun instrument hanging at her waist.

Her facial features were gentle and gracefully delicate, but a thin scar ran horizontally across her face to her chin, destroying her beauty.

The words "lost his soul" probably jolted the woman's mind. She turned her head sharply, repeating, “... lost his soul?”

Upon saying this, the woman became excited, "Yes, Qiuqiu lost his soul...…"

The blue-clad woman nodded her head, raised her hand, and condensed a small group of white silvergrass on her fingertips. She brushed them calmly against the crying child’s forehead.

As the white silvergrass brushed against the child’s forehead, his cries gradually weakened. He leaned against the woman’s shoulder, cried softly, and soon drifted into sleep.

Discovering hope, the woman’s knees softened nearly to the point of collapse. “I beg Daoist immortal to save my child!”

With tears in her eyes, she suppressed her voice for fear of waking up the child, adding, “Qiuqiu is naughty and likes to run out secretly when I’m not looking…”

Her husband died prematurely, leaving her widowed and her children fatherless. She managed to set up a small shop, taking in some manual labor in exchange for money. She was so busy that it was easy to be inattentive to the little ones.

This particular child was naughty and always sneaked out when an adult was not paying attention. Fortunately, the townspeople were born with a simple nature and were familiar with her. Sometimes when they see the child running out, they would help send him back.

A few days ago, late in the evening, the little guy sneaked out once again when his mother was busy negotiating business.

This time something unexpected happened.

When the woman managed to find the little child, he was staring at the wall, his expression blank. It was only when he saw his mother that his mouth trembled, and he began to cry.

In fact, that time, he’d only been gone for a quarter of an hour. The alley that he was found in had a dead end. With night quickly approaching, no one would enter there. The woman didn’t know what happened to the child. When she’d manage to coax his tears away, she realized that something was wrong.

The little guy seemed to have become stupid.

In the past, the little guy had been a clever child. Although he was naughty, he was still very smart. But now, he was often drowsy and his eyes would often take on an empty, blank expression. He cried easily and was hard to coax. What’s more, he developed a bad habit. When he saw someone he liked, he would happily pounce on that person and insist that the person was his father, creating a great commotion.

The woman wiped her tears away. "The old people around said Qiuqiu might have knocked against something and his soul was frightened away..."

The blue-clad woman slightly supported the woman, not allowing her to kneel down. She muttered irresolutely to herself for a moment and then said, “I’m a sound cultivator from Qianyin Pavilion. My name is Duan Yuan. Although I’m not an expert in the soul path, this simple thing such as a frightened soul...If you’re willing to trust me, I believe that I might be able to help.”

The woman saw her spiritual strength just now and this, combined with her gentle demeanor, made her believe completely. She nodded her head in a hurry. “I beg Daoist immortal to save my child!”

The woman in blue took out two talisman. Shen Zhixian glanced at the red tracing on the talisman and recognized that they were the soul-fixing talisman and the soul-seeking talisman.

She skillfully and neatly folded the soul-fixing talisman into a triangle. Then, she stuffed it into the little guy’s arms. After pinching the soul-finding talisman with two fingers, she warmly said, "Please take me to see the alley the child was on that day."

The two gradually disappeared with the child. Shen Zhixian’s brows furrowed slightly in contemplation. Finally, he got it! The xun instrument! The damaged appearance! Sound cultivator!

Duan Yuan!

He remembered now!

Wasn’t this the sound cultivator who was Yan Jin’s suspected female lead in the original book?

Shen Zhixian was shocked, and pulled Yan Jin's sleeve without thinking. "That sound cultivator ..."

This was Yan Jin’s first time coming across an incident relating to the soul. He was thinking about the little fellow’s situation and, after realizing that Shen Zhixian was pulling his sleeve, he turned back a little and tilted his head in confusion. “Huh?”

Shen Zhixian was exuberant with excitement. “What do you think about that sound cultivator...? You saw her, right?”

Yan Jin took a moment to carefully think about it, then he thoughtfully said, "The child was frightened and easily lost his soul, causing this abnormal behavior. That sound cultivator must look for the missing soul. Once she finds the soul, she would be able to resolve the situation.”

Shen Zhixian: "???"

He was asking Yan Jin about what he thought about the sound cultivator. Who asked about the situation regarding the child’s soul?!

Shen Zhixian looked at Yan Jin’s oblivious expression, realizing that he really didn’t notice anything else. He sighed, hating iron for not becoming steel. “Forget it. Let’s walk on and find something to eat.”

The sound cultivator was taking care of the situation with the lost soul. Shen Zhixian was hungry and was too lazy to join in. He pulled Yan Jin to sit down inside a restaurant that was still open.

The restaurant had a faint, lingering fragrance. Shen Zhixian recognized the unique lotus seed scent. His mouth watered, and he asked, “Are there lotus seeds to eat? It smells very fragrant.”

“It’s because Big Brother made lotus seed soup and lotus seed cake.” A sixteen to seventeen year old youth came out from the house and stopped at their table, skillfully reporting the dishes. “We’re about to close for the night. These are the only two dishes left. Would the two people want these?”

Yan Jin was normally uncommunicative and Shen Zhixian was used to it. He only nodded and said, “Bring the lotus seed soup and the lotus seed cake here.”

“Okay!” The teenager responded. He turned back to the kitchen and soon came out to serve their food.

Behind him, a tall, strong man who looked to be about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, came out with his hands partially covered in flour.

The young man smiled at them. “This is our chef, Big Brother Chang.”

He set their meal down and intimately stepped closer to the man next to him. “Is Big Brother Chang going to ask them about A’lian again?”

The man laughed uneasily, then said hello to the two of them. He said with some embarrassment, “The lotus seed cake is still steaming and will be delivered later.”

After a pause, the man hesitantly asked, “May I take the liberty to ask these two guests..where did you come from?”

Shen Zhixian raised an eyebrow and, without elaborating, only said, "Down from the north, heading south.”

The man’s face brightened. He seemed a little excited, and a hopeful light flickered across his eyes. “Then, in your travels, did you happen to meet a youth named A’lian? Very tall, very thin…”

He gestured with his hands as he talked. But, Shen Zhixian shook his head. “We haven’t.”

The light in the man’s eyes dimmed. He smiled became somewhat forced and brittle as he bowed slightly to them. After thanking them, he turned back to the kitchen.

The youth that came out with him didn’t follow right away. He stood

motionless, watching the man leave with obvious disappointment. He bit his lip and entered after a while.

Shen Zhixian inadvertently glanced at his back and noticed that it carried a bit of loneliness and sadness.

But, this was other people’s business. Shen Zhixian, who was hungry, didn't think about it anymore. He was about to dig into their meal when footsteps sounded by the door, followed by a gentle voice calling, “Shopkeeper.”

It sounded like the sound cultivator.

Shen Zhixian looked over and, sure enough, it was the sound cultivator who’d just helped the child find his lost soul.

At this time, it had completely grown dark outside and the only candlelight in the room flickered dimly. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin sat at a corner table. She probably didn’t see them and picked a seat at random.

Then, still with the same gentle temperament, she lifted her skirt, sat down on the stool with legs spread, and boldly stretched her waist in a lazy manner, shouting, “Somebody?”

The delicate and graceful voice that had been used to greet the woman and child was now gone, replaced by a bold, exuberant yell.

From inside came the youth’s answer, “Coming!”

He hurried out, saw the sound cultivator, and looked a little embarrassed as he said, “Guest, we don’t have any more food. I’m afraid we can’t entertain you.”

The sound cultivator was disappointed. “It’s all gone?”

The youth nodded apologetically, explained that they were just about to close down for the night and that the food that had been left was served to

the two guests, who were still waiting for the seed lotus cake.

From the corner of Shen Zhixian’s eyes, he noticed Yan Jin was silently looking at the sound cultivator. His heart moved and, putting down his chopsticks, he waved his hand, calling out, “Young Lady Duan.”

The sound cultivator suddenly heard her name being called. She was shocked and realized that there were actually two people sitting at a corner table. Then, almost instantly, she straightened her back, placed her hands on the table, and gracefully snapped her knees closed. Pasting a gentle smile on her face, she turned her head to look.

——Ah, these were the two ordinary people she’d met earlier.

She was relieved from the bottom of her heart and her dignified posture relaxed again. She said, "You are ..."

Shen Zhixian thought about Yan Jin and deliberately wanted to explore her background. He sent out an invitation with a warm smile. "Young Lady Duan, our meals have not yet started. If you don’t mind, you can ask this little brother to add a pair of chopsticks...”

It stood to reason that a female immortal cultivator, when meeting such an invitation from a stranger, would hesitate.

But, this sound cultivator was either too hungry or her innate temperament was naturally bold. Or, Jan Yin’s protagonist halo was just shining too brightly, thus attracting her. In short, she only paused briefly before standing up cheerfully. With a bright smile, she said, “In that case, I’ll trouble you.”

Xixi: What do you guys think about Yan Jin’s possible “leading lady”?

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 29

Shen Zhixian asked the youth to add another pair of chopsticks. Duan Yuan thanked him generously and sat down.

Oh, what good manners.

For the sake of his disciple, Shen Zhixian deliberately made discreet inquiries into her background. As a result, he ignored the meal in front of him until he had a good general understanding of Duan Yuan’s background.

Duan Yuan was a disciple of Qianyin Pavilion. As the personal disciple of the Third Chamber Master, her status was quite senior. This year, she’d turned twenty years old and, accordingly, had to say goodbye to her master and leave the sect to gain experience.

Duan Yuan’s lips curved. Shen Zhixian had clean and outstanding features, and he looked quite harmless. His style of speech was also very humorous. Her vigilance couldn’t help but drop a bit more. “This is my first time practicing out alone…”

She’d gone out with her sisters several times to other distant places, but those experiences…forget it. It was best not to mention them.

Qianyin Pavilion required their female disciples who’d turned twenty years old to descend the mountain to gain experience. In truth, she wasn’t actually twenty years old yet. She was only seventeen this year. However, she’d been tall since she was a child and misreported her age. Luckily, no one noticed.
Shen Zhixian’s heart was at ease, and he began to talk freely about the

subject of gaining experience. He relied on his experience before transmigrating and utilized the bit of memory that belonged to the original Shen Zhixian to talk about the situation in theory. Then, he listened to Duan Yuan before responding. Their conversation went back and forth like this for a while.

“...That’s all there is to it. Although it can’t be considered thrilling, it can also be quite interesting.” After successfully using the original’s memory to impress Duan Yuan into exclaiming in admiration, Shen Zhixin lowered his head with a smile and picked up a green cabbage to put in his mouth.

As Duan Yuan listened to Shen Zhixian discuss these matters, her attitude changed drastically. She unknowingly shifted her position so that she leaned closer to him. “I really admire people like big brother. Free and easy and unrestrained, with knowledge of the Jianghu. I want to be such a person too.”

Yan Jin noticed her small movements and raised his eyes to glance at her.

Duan Yuan didn’t notice and her eyes continued to glow with envy. She whispered to Shen Zhixian, “The master always asked our female disciples to be dignify and graceful. We mustn’t laugh out loud or do rough things…” Her voice gradually trailed off. When she next spoke, she sounded a bit lost. “I’m afraid I can never be as easygoing as big brother.”

As Shen Zhixian listened, his eyebrows rose. So, it turned out that he hadn’t imagined it. The girl’s gentle and dignified demeanor was only superficial. Instead, she had the lofty ambition to break into the Jianghu!

This was not good. With A’jin’s taciturn nature, he needed a tender and understanding flower at his side to accompany him and help relieve him of his worries. If this disciple daughter-in-law’s heart was too hot-blooded, wanting to jump into the Jianghu, then she would likely neglect A’jin.

Shen Zhixian swallowed the food in his mouth, set aside his chopsticks, and began to persuade her. “You’re already very good like this. Gentle, sweet tempered, and charming. Young Lady Duan, let me take the liberty to say

most men in this world would prefer you like this.”

Because he was racking his brain in an attempt to guide Duan Yuan toward the right temperament, he didn’t notice that, when he said this last sentence, Duan Yuan and Yan Jin both displayed a strange look.

Their expressions were too fleeting, making it difficult for Shen Zhixian to see unless he was paying close attention.

As Shen Zhixian continued to try to persuade her, he noticed something from the corner of his eyes. When he lowered his head, he was immediately shocked by the vegetables that had piled up into a small mountain in his bowl. Seeing Yan Jin’s stretch his chopstick out to put another string of vegetables into his bowl, Sen Zhixian raised his hand to block it. “Okay. Don’t put it in! I can’t eat it all!”

Yan Jin’s chopstick of vegetables was suddenly stopped halfway. With nowhere else to put it, he lowered his lashes and had no choice but to put it into his own bowl. He quietly said, “Sui Xian is too thin. Eat more.”

Shen Zhixian looked at the heap of food in his bowl and his head began to hurt. He picked up his chopsticks and said dejectedly, “Can’t eat anymore, ah…”

His appetite was originally small to begin with. Now that Yan Jin gave him so much food, he couldn’t even eat half of it, okay? Much less all of it.

He muttered to himself, his mind churning. Suddenly, he made a short, soft “Ah” sound. Understanding dawned. It couldn’t be that Yan Jin was jealous?

During this entire time when he was talking to Duan Yuan, Yan Jin had not said a single word. The only time he’d said anything at all was at the beginning, when they were exchanging names.

Yan Jin was jealous.

Duan Yuan was indeed worthy of being the suspected female lead. Particularly since she could move that introverted person to jealousy.

Conscious that he'd intuitively discovered a small secret, Shen Zhixian made an "Oh" sound and began to concentrate on his food. He stopped talking, yielding ground to the two of them.

As a result, this concession caused matters to come to a screeching halt.

Shen Zhixian, who wanted to give them time to communicate, had a difficult time eating the full bowl of food. Afterward, he was so full that he just wanted to lie down and rest. Still, the other two people remained silent.

Shen Zhixian inwardly sighed, exclaiming to himself that Yan Jin's path to romance will probably be filled with bumps. This entire time, Yan Jin's face hadn't even shown the slightest bit of emotion. As a result, Shen Zhixian could only laugh and said, "It's rare for strangers to meet by chance and hit it off. Today's meal is simple and crude. Young Lady Duan, please don't take offense."

Duan Yuan hadn't spoken since Shen Zhixian began to quietly eat; she only followed suit and enjoyed her own meal in silence. After hearing Shen Zhixian speak again, she smiled and immediately looked at Shen Zhixian. "Big Brother Sui is generous and saved me from hunger. I should thank you instead."

She hesitated, then asked in a low voice. "I'll be staying here for a day or two. Will Big Brother Sui be leaving tomorrow?

When they were chatting earlier, she discovered that the brothers were here to sight-see and amuse themselves.

She saw that Shen Zhixian had no spiritual power and was an ordinary person so she automatically placed Yan Jin in the same category. In truth, Yan Jin's cultivation was far higher than her. When she reached out with a bit of her senses, she felt nothing. Therefore, she immediately assumed he was also an ordinary person.

She wanted to stay a bit longer because she discovered that there was something wrong with the child’s soul and she wanted to get to the bottom of it. If Big Brother Sui came to amuse himself and have fun...

This small town was too simple. She was afraid they might just rest for a night here and then leave tomorrow.

Big Brother Sui was so interesting. This was the first time she’d met such an interesting person! She still wanted to find a good opportunity tomorrow to ask the big brother some questions.

After all, she was still young and had very little involvement with the outside world. She’d been confined to Qianyin Pavilion since she was a child. Therefore, it was quite rare for her to meet such an interesting person and become friends with him.

But ... she glanced at Yan Jin quietly. The big brother's cousin didn't say a word, making him hard to get along with.

Shen Zhixian didn't think much. He was too preoccupied the fact that this might be Yan Jin’s future heroine. At this time, when he saw her quietly look at Yan Jin, he subconsciously wanted to scheme and immediately decided. “No. We also planned to rest here for a day or two.”

He looked at Yan Jin, his eyes full of smiles. "Alright?"

Yan Jin looked down at the table without speaking.

The disappointment in Duan Yuan's eyes was swept away, and she responded brightly, "Then, Big Brother Sui, I'll come to you tomorrow with some questions."

"Good, good!" Shen Zhixian responded with a grin. He decided it would be a good opportunity to have a talk with Yan Jin. A big man should take the initiative. Even the young lady had already taken the initiative! Yet, he was still so sullen!

The sweet fragrance of lotus seeds drifted over, and the curtains moved, revealing the cook with a basket full of cakes. After he carefully placed it on the table, he said, “Guests, you’ve waited for a long time. Please eat slowly.”

Shen Zhixian was already full, but the scent was so tempting, causing his fingers to move by themselves. Afterward, as he looked at the little cake, he couldn't help but want to eat another piece.

As his chopsticks stretched out, he heard the chef asking Duan Yuan with some anticipation, "Guest, have you seen a boy named A’lian?"

After he finished repeating the same remarks he’d made to Shen Zhixian earlier, Duan Yuan thought about it and then shook her head. “No.”

The chef sighed again with disappointment, took a few steps back and propped his hand on the table behind him. The candlelight didn't shine well there, and his figure looked a little fuzzy. The outline of the whole person seemed to blend into the darkness.

Duan Ye looked at him for a while and suddenly asked, "This town is a bit remote and there are few customers. You should look elsewhere."

"Big Brother Chang is not in good health and cannot travel far." This came from the youth who had served the meal earlier. He parted the curtains, walked out, and stood in front of the man, guarding him like a small, vigilant animal. Yet, there was a hint of nervousness in his eyes.

Duan Yuan murmured, “Ah,” but her eyes didn’t move away from Big Brother Chang. After a while, she said with regret, “I’ve never seen such a boy. If I see him later, I’ll tell him where you are.”

The words seemed to touch Big Brother Chang. He pushed the youth in front of him slightly to the side and took a big step forward.

“That’s good too,” he said excitedly, his speech sounding a little confused.

“I’ve waited for him for so many years. He’s waited for me for so many years. It’s time for us to meet. It’s time to meet…”

His eyes gradually widened, as if he was remembering something. Thinking about A’lian and forgetting the person in front of him, his steps seemed to float back toward the kitchen.

After the youth was pushed by him, he remained frozen. On his face was a hint of grievance. Biting his bottom lip, he stood tensely but didn’t say anything.

After a moment of silence, Shen Zhixian beckoned for the youth to come and collect payment. Duan Yuan thoughtfully retracted her eyes and asked, “Where is Older Brother Sui resting tonight?”

Regarding this question, Shen Zhixian was too hungry when they arrived, so he had wanted to find a place to eat first. As a result, they still hadn’t found an inn yet. In fact, he didn’t know if there were any inns with room available.

Noticing his expression, Duan Yuan immediately guessed the truth. She smiled. “This town is a bit small. I walked around and only saw one inn. Right now, there is still a vacant room. Older Brother Sui can go and take a look.”

...

Shen Zhixian had no options but to settle on the last room in the small inn where Duan Yuan was also staying.

He also had to share a room with Yan Jin once again.

Shen Zhixian sighed, thinking there was no helping it. The inn was just too small, with only seven or eight rooms. There were already a few people who'd passed by earlier and rented up most of the rooms. As a result, the inn was nearly full.

Their room was directly across from Duan Yuan’s. The three bid farewell at the door and retreated to their respective rooms.

After shutting the door, Yan Jin sat down at the table. Shen Zhixian was too full and paced around in the room. These humble rooms were not soundproof and so he deliberately lowered his voice when he said, “What do you think of this girl?”

Yan Jin’s mouth tightened. In his mind came Duan Yuan’s voice, saying "Big Brother." He lowered his lashes.

Shortly after meeting and saying a few words together at a table, she was already saying “Big Brother Sui” with such intimacy.

Yan Jin quietly asked, “Does Sui Xian like her?”

The person was pretty good. Leaving aside the issue of the gentle shell, she was lively and well-behaved. These two factors made her quite suitable for Yan Jin. Shen Zhixian thought about it and then casually opened his mouth to say, “She’s okay. I think she’s pretty good.”

Yan Jin’s hand, which was resting on his knee, tightened.

Shen Zhixian went on to say, “You should also talk to her more. You being so taciturn might scare her away...”

Yan Jin jerked up with a tense expression, abruptly interrupting Shen Zhixian’s words. “It’s getting late. Sui Xian should rest early.”

“Ai!” Shen Zhixian stopped, noticed that Yan Jin’s handsome face was tense, and nodded in understanding. Young people can be shy when encountering these things for the first time. He ended the topic by saying, “Okay. You already know the situation so be good.”

--Don’t know!

Yan Jin gritted his teeth and didn’t speak. For the first time in his life, he

felt irritable and anxious. He couldn’t help but want to pull Shen Zhixian and leave immediately, getting as far away from the sound cultivator as possible so they wouldn’t have to see her again.

But Master….

His heart felt as if it’d been burned by a torch, forming blisters that throbbed hotly and painfully. He strode to the window, intending to open it and get some fresh air. Just as he was about to push open the window, a squeak sounded in his ears.

He and Shen Zhixian both looked in the direction of sound.

It was coming from Duan Yuan’s room, indicating that she’d opened her door.

Duan Yuan didn’t seem to realize how loud the door was. After a pause, she stepped out and carefully closed the door again.

After another squeak came the sound of her light footsteps gradually fading away.

It was so late. Where was Duan Yuan going?

Although Shen Zhixian had no spiritual power, his ears and eyes remained as sharp as ever. Yan Jin didn't have to mention it nor could Duan Yuan’s footsteps be concealed.

Shen Zhixian made a surprised sound and surmised, “Did she eat too much and couldn’t sleep so she went for a walk?”

He walked next to Yan Jin and echoed his action, this time actually pushing open the window.

The moment the window opened, a cool breeze drifted in. He breathed a sigh of relief and turned to look at Yan Jin. “The moonlight is good, and Young Lady Duan may just be going for a walk.”

He thought for a moment and said encouragingly, “Why don’t you follow?”

A moonlit night encounter would be perfect!

Yan Jin lowered his head slightly. He was half a head taller than Shen Zhixian and, with one glance, he saw Shen Zhixian’s expression.

He was silent for a moment, wondering what Shen Zhixian was thinking. In the end, he turned around and pushed the door open to leave.

Shen Zhixian stood with one hand still holding the window frame. As he looked at Yan Jin’s retreating back, he smiled a little. Then, he retracted his hand and slowly walked to the bed. Sitting down, he sighed. “Ah, A’jin has grown up…”

He leaned back against the bed frame and paused for a long moment. Without Yan Jin's presence, the surrounding was suddenly too quiet. Loneliness nudged in but he quickly assured himself that it was probably just the simple matter of “the cabbage raised at home is being enjoyed by another pig.”

The candle flickered in the lantern, and Shen Zhixian regained his senses. He remembered something and felt around in his storage bag. Finally, after turning it over, he pulled out a book.

It was the work of Qingyun Bai Xiaosheng, which he’d bought at a high price in the bookstore that day.

“Cohabitating with Master?” His depressed mood vanished. A faint sneer appeared on his lips as he softly said, “Let’s see which melon would be so bold that he dared pen this illicit thing…”

He read for a long time.

He must admit that this Qingyun Bai Xiaosheng had a lot of ability. This talent was buried deep in Qingyun Sect.

At the beginning, Shen Zhixian only read woodenly. But, his interest gradually grew more and more intent as he read page after page.

Qingyun Bai Xiaosheng was not so bold after all. The protagonists in the book had pseudonyms. As Shen Zhixian read, he simply looked at it as if it was other people's stories. The more he read, the more he became addicted and couldn't extricate himself. It was to the point that he became almost like the person he'd meet at the inn that day, the one that had been sighing over the books.

What a beautiful master and apprentice relationship. Like a budding magnolia, this fragrance was faint and lingering. When it finally bloomed, who knew how warm it would be!

As he read page after page, Shen Zhixian began to yawn drowsily. It seemed that he'd already read nearly half of the book.

So lovely.

He decided to forgive Qingyun Bai Xiaosheng a little bit.

After a long time, Shen Zhixian looked at the door but Yan Jin hadn't returned.

As drowsiness surged, he closed the book and his mind gradually began to drift into sleep. He was too tired to blow out the candle and, after pushing the book under his pillow, he quickly fell asleep.

Yan Jin came back in the middle of the night. Under the moonlight, he lightly jumped in from the window, afraid he might startle Shen Zhixian if he came through the door.

Shen Zhixian was already asleep.

Because Yan Jin was not there, his sleeping posture was not as proper as it'd been before. Yan Jin walked over to pull the comforter up to cover him

better. He gently pulled his hand out and tucked it into the comforter.

Shen Zhixian rolled over.

As soon as he turned over, his head moved involuntarily, causing the pillow to shift. The book pressed underneath became partially exposed.

Yan Jin stopped for a moment. After saying “Master” and waiting for a long time, he carefully reached out.

And quietly pulled out the book.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 30

That day at the inn, Yan Jin arrived late and didn’t hear what the storyteller was saying. Then, he noticed Shen Zhixian and didn’t pay much attention to anything else.

He only faintly heard that it had something to do with Master and himself.

Yan Jin tilted his head to look at Shen Zhixian, who was sleeping soundly, his long eyelashes casting light shadows on his cheeks.

He hesitated for a moment and finally opened the book gently.

What could be written about Master and him?

Yan Jin, who originally only wanted to turn two pages at random to see what the book was about, kept on reading even after turning a few pages.

Because, everything he’d felt was written here…

But, it was so...

Yan Jin couldn't think of the right words that would accurately describe his mood. The expression on his face echoed his internal confusion. He stared blankly at the sleeping Shen Zhixian.

They hadn’t been separated during the entire journey. Master probably bought this book when he went into the bookstore. But, Master clearly told him at that time that he’d encountered a black boss and didn’t buy anything.

However, Yan Jin remembered that the owner had murmured that he’d sold a set...

Yan Jin's sight involuntarily fell on Shen Zhixian’s storage bag, which rested on the pillow next to him.

Fortunately, reason prevented him from reaching out for Shen Zhixian's storage bag.

The candle was on the verge of burning out. The wick, which had been burning for a long time, flickered and burst, startling hi.

He pursed his lips, marked his spot on the book, and turned to blow out the candle. Afterward, he went to the window and used the moonlight to carefully read pages after pages.

..…

Shen Zhixian woke up in a daze, totally unaware of what had happened that night. The sky was already bright and the morning light peered in through the half-opened window.

Because he hadn't gotten enough sleep, his mind was still muddy. At first, he thought he was in his own room, and so he skillfully rolled around happily and lazily in the comforter. Then, he noticed a figure from the corner of his eyes.

The inn was simple, except for a wooden bed, a wooden table, and two wooden stools.

At this time, Yan Jin was sitting upright on a wooden stool at the table.

Maybe it was his unconscious mumbling that disturbed the person who'd just closed his eyes, but Yan Jin opened his eyes and slowly turned to looked at him.

Shen Zhixian immediately grew sober. He jerked upright, laid down his

hands and feet, tugged the comforter neatly, and sat up, tucking his hair behind his ears. He greeted Yan Jin. “Good morning...What time is it?"

Because he’s just woken up, Shen Zhixian’s voice was still a little hoarse. He coughed twice, stood on barefoot, and poured a glass of water to drink.

The cultivator, who was only wearing a thin inner robe, looked unkempt and lazy. When he drank, his delicate adam apple moved up and down. Because he was drinking too quickly, a tiny trail of water dripped down from the corner of his mouth. It rolled down his chin to his neck and disappeared into his loose collar.

Leaving behind a meandering water mark on his hair skin.

Yan Jin turned his head calmly. No one else knew that what flashed in his mind at that moment were these sentences from the book: "Dewdrop lifted Magnolia into his arms. Magnolia, who was tired and sleepy, rested his temple against Dewdrop’s shoulder, longing for sleep."

He really was like a magnolia flower, resting desolate and cold on the highest branch. Even when he hid his identity, he was still too precious to be touched.

Yan Jin lowered his voice and quietly said, "It’s still dusk."

Shen Zhixian finished drinking the glass of cold water. His eyes cleared and he lazily paced back to the couch. He asked casually, "When did you get back? "

"Half past midnight. "

"Ah." Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows. Was Yan Jin made out of cotton? He came back so quietly at midnight that Shen Zhixian didn’t hear anything at all.

What else did he want to say? When he thought it over, he suddenly remembered that he’d half finished the book last night. He quietly slipped

his hand under the pillow—Nothing.

Shen Zhixian’s heart jerked, and he slowly retracted his hand with false nonchalance. "Have you been sitting there since you came back? That’s not good. Why didn’t you wake me up so I could move and allow you to rest on the bed?”

Of course, the bed in Qingyun Sect was bigger and more comfortable in comparison, but this bed shouldn’t be too small for two people to sleep comfortably together.

Shen Zhixian had adapted to his new identity as Yan Jin’s cousin very well. He felt that since they’re “brothers,” they should be more familiar with each other. It wasn’t difficult to extend an invitation to share the bed.

However, when these words fell into Yan Jin’s ears, their meaning changed.

“The snow was heavy, obscuring the warm morning light into a faint, blurry glow. The person dressed in white was full of beauty as he leaned casually on the bedside, his expression loose and unrestrained. His white, jade-like hand lifted the comforter slightly and, as his eyebrows lazily lifted and his lips curved, he said to his disciple, “The day is snowy and cold. It’s better to warm up by sleeping together.”

Of course, that was a situation that Qingyun Bai Xiaosheng had made up. Shen Zhixian would never say those kinds of words to him.

But ...

Yan Jin silently raised her hand and turned over a clean cup. He quickly gulped down a glass of cold water, pushed his confusion to the back of his mind, and said, “En, there’s no need.”

—Words can cause a lot of trouble and inflict much suffering.

—But, he still wanted to read it.

Yan Jin's gaze unconsciously drifted to Shen Zhixuan's storage bag. When his gaze got halfway there, he forcibly dragged it back. As he looked down at the teacup in his hand, his thoughts fluctuated.

When Master read these words, wasn't it...He didn't mind these extraordinary things too much?

Of course, Shen Zhixian didn't know how Yan Jin's heart went back and forth a thousand times. On his end, he was too busy pondering. Where was his book? He'd rested it here, that thick and beautiful book!

Could it be that he was so tired that he'd somehow stow it in his storage bag?

Naturally, he couldn't go digging through his storage bag in front of Yan Jin. It wouldn't look good if Yan Jin accidentally saw him pull out something bad.

He thought about it for a bit and finally decided that he must have been too sleepy and ended up tucking it into his storage bag. After all, Yan Jin wasn't the type of person that would secretly take his things.

In order to check, he would have to wait for Yan Jin to leave.

So, at this moment, he didn't mention it. Shortly after, the two went out for breakfast. Yan Jin, urged by Shen Zhixian, unenthusiastically invited Duan Yuan to come along.

However, Duan Yuan seemed to be very preoccupied today, appearing as if she was deeply pondering over something.

Shen Zhixian noticed this and, remembering that Yan Jin also went out last night, began to wonder what had happened last night after Yan Jin went out.

Did the two talk? Where did they go? Did he end up suffocating the girl with his quiet, taciturn nature…?

As Shen Zhixian’s mind churned into a mess, Duan Yuan suddenly put down her chopsticks, bit her bottom lip, and softly said, “Big Brother Sui.”

Shen Zhixian responded subconsciously, and the first thought that turned up in his mind was that these two wanted to confess.

He chewed the pastry in his mouth, suddenly feeling as if the taste had gone bad. Yan Jin had managed to please the heroine so quickly? He was indeed worthy of being the protagonist.

"Do you remember the child who lost his soul yesterday?"

"Huh?" Shen Zhixian said blankly. "That crying bundle?"

"I think ... he lost his soul because he was scared by something,” Duan Yuan earnestly said. "I went out alone and took a walk last night. I found something wrong. There’s something in this town that shouldn't belong to this yang world."

Shen Zhixuan looked at Yan Jin lightly. Alone? Then, where did Yan Jin go?

Yan Jin noticed his gaze and calmly looked over. After a while, he pushed the plate with the last piece of pastry in front of Shen Zhixian.

"I’m done eating..." Shen Zhixian retracted his gaze and said casually, "Ghost?"

Duan Yuan said quietly, "You are not afraid of ghosts, Big Brother Sui?"

She’d feared that an ordinary person would be afraid after hearing about ghosts. Therefore, she hesitated for a long time, finding it hard to say, "I think there is a ghost in this town ..."

In fact, they’d all seen that ghost.

As Duan Yuan was pondering how to make it clear, Shen Zhixian swallowed the pastry in his mouth and washed it down with a sip of tea. He

slowly said, "The chef yesterday?"

Duan Yuan was really shocked. She said in surprise, "Big Brother Sui, how did you know?”

Shen Zhixian's thoughts turned back and forth a thousand times. In the end, he looked at Yan Jin with a smile. "A’jin told me."

"My cousin is not good with words, and I had no time yesterday to tell you that he is a disciple under Qingyun Sect, practicing the sword path."

Shen Zhixian felt that he was really the best master in the world. He was invested in ensuring his disciple’s lifelong happiness. He tried to steer the topic to Yan Jin. “I’m not talented and am unable to cultivate into an immortal. But my cousin is well known in Qingyun Sect. You both should have a lot to talk about in the future. "

He quietly gave Yan Jin a signal to jump in, but Yan Jin either didn’t know or didn't understand what he meant. He only looked down at the table, not bothering to say anything.

Shen Zhixian sighed inwardly. He did intend to let the two communicate more. But Yan Jin was being so glum...He heaved another inward sigh.

So that was it. Duan Yuan suddenly realized the truth. Yesterday, she saw that Shen Zhixian was an ordinary person with no power and thought that his cousin was too! He turned out to be a sword cultivator. His must be much more skilled than her, which explained why she was unable to detect his cultivation stage.

But ...

Duan Yuan quietly glanced at Sui Xian first and then looked at Yan Jin. At that moment, the latter also happened to look over too. Their eyes met and his cold gaze nearly choked her. She immediately turned her eyes away.

—Big Brother Sui’s cousin didn’t seem to like her very much.

—Forget it. She’ll just talk to Big Brother Sui!

…..

The reason why Duan Yuan wanted to stay for a few days was to get to the bottom of this matter. Now that everyone turned out to be in the same circle —excluding Big Brother Sui—this matter became much easier to handle.

The three of them returned to yesterday’s restaurant.

As they approached, they could smell the fragrant scent of lotus seeds. The lotus seed cakes and lotus seed soup were probably Big Brother Chang’s specialty. After eating them, they really did leave behind a lingering aftertaste.

Even Shen Zhixian, who was used to eating good food, felt that it was delicious.

There were no customers in the restaurant. The youth sat at the table, bored and humming in a small tone. Then, he shouted toward the kitchen, "Big Brother Chang, there are no guests. You don't have to cook all the time ..."

A vague voice responded, “....No, it’s almost time for A’lian to arrive.”

The youth stopped talking, his face settling into a morose expression. He no longer hummed and slumped on the table in a daze.

Thinking that they would be less alarmed if a woman entered, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin waited outside while Duan Yuan waked in alone, pretending to be interested in buying lotus seed cakes.

The youth responded to her, stood up, and enter the kitchen. He soon came out holding a packet of lotus seed cakes.

After Duan Yuan took the packet, she casually asked, “Can I see your chef? I really like these lotus seed cakes and wanted to say a few words to him."

The youth sat back down on the table without and said without looking up, “Big Brother Chang is busy today. He doesn’t want to see anyone.”

There wasn't even a customer. What was he busy doing?

Duan Yuan asked again but received the same answer. Left with no other choice, she came out with the cakes and shook her head helplessly.

Shen Zhixian thoughtfully looked in the direction of the chef, and said briskly, "It’s fine. We’ll come back later."

He added meaningfully, "Some things shouldn't be exposed to the sun."

They waited until late in the evening, when very few people lingered on the streets.

When they arrived once more, the little town was on the verge of falling asleep and the youth was wiping the tables clean, clearly getting ready to close. When he looked up and saw Shen Zhixian, he was startled and said, “Three guests, I’m sorry but we’re closing.”

“We want to see your chef.” After conducting more investigations during the day, Duan Yuan had concluded that the chef was indeed quite fishy. She straightforwardly said, “Since it was inconvenient during the day, then he should be able to come out at this time.

The youth immediately became vigilant. “Who are you? Big Brother Chang is very busy and can’t come see you…”

“No, he will,” Shen Zhixian said with a smile. “Tell him that we found A’lian and he’ll come out.”

The youth’s face changed drastically. Before he could say anything, the curtains jerked open and the tall, large man came out. He looked around wildly, his voice brimming with excitement as he said, “A’lian’s here? Where is he?”

His figure was faded, almost integrating with the dim surrounding. But, he seemed to be unaware of this. After looking around and not seeing the person he most wanted to see, he looked at Shen Zhixian.

The color of his eyes were a turbid dark gray.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 31

There were only four figures in the dim candlelight.

No one answered the man's question, leaving only silence to fill the space around them. The youth’s face grew tense. He dropped the rag, ready to kick out these people.

But he was stopped by the man.

"Big Brother Chang?" the youth said hesitantly. "They lied to you. Shall I kick them out?"

The man slowly shook his head. In the candlelight, deep grief and sadness were evident on his face. After taking a few steps back, one leg directly pressed into the stool, where it flickered for a moment, and then re-solidified after it’d passed through completely.

Everyone saw this. The youth’s pupils dilated, and his voice became high-pitched. "Big Brother Chang!"

Big Brother Chang probably felt that something was wrong because he looked down for a moment and exhaled loudly. He asked, "Am I dead?”

“You’ve already died.” Shen Zhixian pulled back his sleeves a little and sat down on the wooden stool. "After you died, you refused to be reborned and became a ghost instead. But, your soul will soon scatter."

The man didn't respond but the youth looked nervously at Shen Zhixian. “What does that mean?”

"Literally," Shen Zhixian calmly said. "He had an obsession in his heart and won't enter the cycle of reincarnation. It’s already been a long time, but he still couldn’t pass on. His soul is on the verge of scattering. You’d better try to find a new elder brother soon."

The youth suddenly recoiled and tripped over the stool, causing him to stagger. The man tried to catch him, but his hand passed through the youth’s body.

The man's open fingers curled before he brought them back down to his sides. After a moment of silence, he sighed, and ignoring the youth’s insistence that he stop, he began to talk about all the old affairs that had long lingered at the bottom of his heart.

The man’s story was not full of excitement; it was merely the separation of life and death, one of the most common partings in the world.

"My house was next to A’lian's. We grew up together as children so our relationship was very good..."

It just so happened that they both lived near a lotus pond. Every summer, the pond would be full of green jade lotus heads that would open and bloom into the most beautiful lotus flowers.

At ten years old, they loved nothing more than to go out and make a ruckus. Whenever they meet, they would pay close attention to this beautiful scene. For A’chang, playing boisterously by the water and eating lotus seeds were the best things.

Because the weather was hot during the summer, and because his body was strong and healthy, he would often take off his shirt and soak in the water for a whole day.

“A’lian wasn't actually named A’lian at first. It came about because he loved to eat lotus seeds. I always laughed that he was born as a lotus demon. But he couldn’t go in the water so when the lotus flowers became ripe, I would often pick lotus seeds for him…”

Unlike A’cheng, A’lian was a premature baby. He was very thin and could easily get sick from the cold wind. At first, A’chang was not sensible, and encouraged him to play in the water. As a result, A’lian got a high fever that night and almost didn’t survive.

A’chang felt guilty for having almost killed him. Since then, he obeyed A’lian's words, took care of him, and coaxed him. He would often pick the largest and sweetest lotus seeds for him.

In the evening, even after sunset, the weather was still hot and humid. The thin boy was sitting on the embankment, holding many large lotus seed heads in his arms, and called out in a low voice, "A’chang gege, it's getting dark. Come up quickly. The water is getting cold.”

A’chang swam obediently toward him but did not go ashore. He looked at the lotus in his arms and thoughtfully said, “You’ve been eating it all day. Don’t you get tired of eating it? "

A’lian said, "Not tired. It’s very delicious. I can only eat this. ”

He was weak and had to pay attention to his diet. Unlike A’chang, he couldn’t just eat anything he wanted. Because he often got cold, even the lotus seeds had to be eaten in moderation.

A’chang was silent. After a while, he seemed to have made up his mind. "Eating lotus seeds is too simple. When I grow up a bit, I’ll go out and learn to make more delicious things."

As he put both hands on the bank and pushed himself out of the water, he vowed, “I’ll make the best food for you.”

A’lian pursed his lips, smiled slightly, and responded with his agreement. Then, he held A’chang’s hand, and they went home together.

A’chang was a good man. So, being a man, he kept to his words. After a few years, he packed up and left.

He’d planned it well. By that time, his brothers had grown up and were able to take care of the family. His reasons for leaving served two purposes: the first was to make a living, and the second was in hope of achieving his promise to A’lian that year. In this way, he would be able to kill two birds with one stone.

On the day he left, A’lian stood at the village entrance and looked at him, holding many lotus seed heads in his arms, which had been given by A’chang. .

"If you still want more after finishing these, let my younger brother pick it for you," A’chang said. "You can't run into the water to catch a cold."

A’lian nodded smartly. He was eighteen years old that year, but because of his weak body, he still looked like a sixteen to seventeen year old boy. As a result, he was much shorter than A’chang. He whispered, "You come back early."

A’chang said "en" and didn't worry too much. "Relax, after one to three years, I’ll come back! By then, you’ll be blessed with good food!"

His hearty laughter gradually faded into the distance. But, who knew that after this departure, they would be separated by life and death.

Speaking of it now, the ghost sighed wearily and murmured, "Who would have imagined that later I would get caught up in a riot."

Later, the young man in his twenties stared vacantly at the full moon brightening the dark, boundless night. He couldn’t go back, but he couldn’t move forward either. Behind him, the bloody, still-warmed bodies were being consumed by a bright blaze.

His body laid among them.

It stood to reason that people who died would enter the cycle of reincarnation to be reborn. But, A’chang was tormented by the promise of

that year, causing his soul to flee and wander the world.

In the end, he became a wandering spirit, his memory gone. He forgot the way home, and sometimes, he would even forget that he was a spirit, still thinking that he was an ordinary person. But, he couldn't find his A'lian. So, he could only make a lot of lotus seed cakes and lotus seed soups.

Later, he ended up at this village and met a young orphan who was having a difficult life running a restaurant.

Perhaps, it was because the youth's clear eyes were so similar to A'lian's eyes in his vague memory. A'chang decided to stay for a few years. But, every time he saw a new guest who traveled from afar, he would ask after A'lian.

And, ultimately, heard nothing.

The existence of the soul in the Yang world was also time-bound. Once this time expired, the soul could only completely dissipate in this world, and there would be no reincarnation.

When the youth saw that the man's spirit was getting more and more faded, his eyes became red-rimmed. He asked, "Is there no way to save Big Brother Chang?"

"To save him, he must put down his obsession," Shen Zhixian said "As for how to let go...Couldn't it dissipate once he finally achieve it?"

His attention was on the youth, and he didn't notice that Yan Jin, who'd been silent all this time, was startled the moment he heard him say this.

If you're obsessed with it, your obsession will dissipate once you achieve it...

Everyone's eyes were focused on the spirit. Except for Yan Jin, who was quietly looking at Shen Zhixian with gradually deepening eyes.

The youth was confused. After a while, he slowly reacted, his eyes slightly widening. "But…"

Big Brother Chang only wanted to see A’lian. Where could they find an A’lian?!

“Look for someone to pretend.” Shen Zhixian glanced at the rapidly evaporating spirit, who was beginning to look confused and inattentive. “He’s now a confused ghost. If you claim to be A’lian, he’ll believe you. Only, if you do this, you’ll be wronged.”

This decision was too cruel. The boy suddenly bit his bottom lip. A tear clung to the corner of his eyes, as if on the verge of falling, and a pair of fists clenched tightly.

But, in the end, he still asked, “What should I do?”

Shen Zhixian didn't answer him and looked at Duan Yuan. He couldn’t do it without spiritual power, and Yan Jin’s sword skills wouldn’t be able to help. In the end, they could only rely on the disciple from Qiangyin Pavilion...

Duan Yuan hadn’t spoken since Brother Chang told them his story. It was as if the story was so moving that it’d stunned her.

Shen Zhixian said in a soft, low voice, "Young Lady Duan, there is work to do."

Duan Yuan snapped back to her senses with a brief “Ah.” She gently pulled the xin instrument from her waist and placed the mouth against her lips.

When the soul requiem resounded quietly, the dissipating soul gave a violent start and then slowly re-solidified.

The youth stiffly took two steps toward him and, following the general description that A’cheng had given about A’lian, he called in a quavering voice, “A’chang gege.”

The spirit froze. He turned his head in the direction of the youth. He paused on him for a long time, and then, as if suddenly remembering something, he called, “A’lian?”

"It's me."

This name was indeed the crux of the spirit's obsession. The spirit instantly burst with great joy; even the youth had never seen him so excited. He rushed over in quick, large strides and pulled the youth into a hug. "I finally found you, A'lian….I'm back."

He babbled and mumbled and finally said, "I'm sorry to have left for so long. But I've learned to make lotus seed cake and lotus seed soup. The taste should be very good…"

Afterward, everything proceeded smoothly. Before, he'd wanted A'lian to taste his lotus seed cake and lotus seed soup. Now that they'd finally "met" again, he eagerly went to the kitchen and hurriedly brought out a plate of goods.

A faint fragrance lingered on the nose, alluding to a taste that was familiar to the people around.

The youth bit into the delicious pastries but, instead of tasting sweet, he only tasted bitterness. Aware of the spirit's expectations, the youth chewed the dry pastry, swallowed, and forced a smile. "A'chang gege, it tastes very good."

The words that the spirit had been waiting for so long to hear finally fell into his ears. He smiled, and the obsession that had clogged at the bottom of his heart finally cleared away. He exhaled one last breath, and the whole soul began to become transparent.

This was a sign of impending departure.

The spoon in the youth's hand slipped and fell to the ground, where it shattered. He looked at the fading spirit, and tears streamed down his face. "Big Brother Chang…"

He and Big Brother Chang had depended on each other for a long time. After so many years, he'd regard the other person as his closest person. But, Big Brother Chang...

Even to his last breath, all Big Brother Chang could remember was A’lian. The youth feared that the man couldn’t even remember his name.

The pain of being abandoned and forgotten inundated his heart. The youth cried out in a sob, “Big Brother Chang! I’m not A’lian, I’m…”

He said his name loud and clear, desperate for it to be heard and remembered. “Look at me…”

After shouting this, the youth stumbled toward the spirit.

Yan Jin was the closest to him. Fearing that the youth would affect the spirit’s departure, he tried to stop him. But, the moment his hand rose, a pale, cold hand touched the back of his hand, stopping him.

“There’s no need. It’s over.” After saying this sentence, Shen Zhixian turned to look back at the pair. His eyes glimmered. “Treasure all the good things in the present. Don't disappoint the innocent.”

After all, it was unknown whether A’lian was still alive. However, the dead soul’s heart only had his old friend and, as a result, he became deeply entangled in the past, ultimately hurting the youth in front of him.

Shen Zhixian said this unintentionally, and it was purely sentimental. But Yan Jin was shocked when he heard it.

Cherish the present…

Don’t hurt the innocent…

These light and gentle words, said almost in a sigh, slammed into him like a hammer, hitting the bottom of Yan Jin’s heart. A roaring sound echoed in his ears.

Xixi: The Lian in A’lian means lotus. But, I feel sorry for the youth, whose name even we don't know. Not sure if the author did it intentionally, but it

definitely made him appear even more pitiful. On another note, will this provide Yan Jin with the jolt he needed to finally let go of the past?

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 32

The youth sank into sorrow and couldn’t extricate himself. The three people didn’t bother him, so he quietly left to sort out his emotions.

Duan Yuan was also upset, but she was more curious…

“Big Brother Sui, how do you know so much about these ghosts?”

Shen Zhixian made an expression of surprise and said, “I was curious about these things so, as we traveled, A’jin talked about it a lot with me.”

As they came out of the restaurant, Shen Zhixian pretended to unintentionally walk around to Yan Jin’s right side. As a result, Yan Jin ended up sandwiched between him and Duan Yuan. At this moment, Duan Yuan was looking at Yan Jin.

She laughed and said, “You two have such a good relationship. Big Brother Yan may look like someone who doesn’t talk much, but he turned out to be so powerful. Now, I can ask more questions when there is time.”

She’d spent some time with them so she was familiar enough with them. As a result, Duan Yuan walked comfortably with a swing in her steps. Within the sect, she’d had to hold back her true temperament. It'd been a while she left that she'd seen her fellow disciples. Therefore, under Shen Zhixian’s influence, she was able to relax a lot more and even dared to joke with Yan Jin.

She knew that Yan Jin was a quiet person and didn’t expect him to answer. She’d only made a joke and was prepared to change the subject. Who knew

that, this time, soon after her words ended, Yan Jin would slowly respond.

“I was taught well by my master.”

Duan Yuan said, “....Ah?”

Shen Zhixian: “....”

Duan Yuan was surprised that Yan Jin would actually respond to her words. She’d always thought that Yan Jin didn’t like her.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes turned blank, surprised that Yan Jin was speaking about him. Since he’d concealed his identity and Yan Jin didn’t know, he intentionally tried to give himself more face. He said, "Your Master is very good."

Yan Jin: "..."

He turned and looked at Shen Zhixian steadily. Shen Zhixian was somewhat wary, and when he saw that Yan Jin was staring at him with such intense concentration, he started to feel inexplicably strange, thinking that maybe flowers had grown on his face. Yan Jin only softly said. "Yes, he’s very good."

As she looked at them, Duan Yuan, who was about to say something, suddenly closed her mouth, feeling confused.

She could understand every word, but why did she suddenly feel that the two were talking about something that only they knew?

At this moment, they’re all leaving town and were faced with the problem of parting.

Shen Zhixian intended to follow Yan Jin's previous decision and continue to go south. If Duan Yuan’s plan was different from them ...

Forget it. He’d done his best these two days. If the protagonists were meant

to be together, they will always meet again in the future. He needed to worry about his own life first.

However, they really were brought together by fate. Duan Yuan confirmed the direction they were heading and quickly said, "I also plan to go south. There’s a rumor that a very good secret realm in the south will opened soon. I plan to check it out. If you don’t mind, shall we go together? "

A secret realm.

Shen Zhixian keenly captured these two words, and subconsciously thought of the demon fish scale that was hidden in the secret realm.

Yan Jin said that he wanted to go south, and Duan Yuan also said that there might be a secret realm in the south… The two main character’s choices were exactly the same.

Shen Zhixian couldn’t control his smile, suddenly feeling hopeful. This made his heart relaxed, and he answered in agreement.

The original book didn’t elaborate much on the details, but it did mention that Yan Jin got the scale and gave it to the sound cultivator.

This sound cultivator was undoubtedly Duan Yuan.

Shen Zhixian thought about it. Maybe in the original book, Yan Jin and Duan Yuan knew each other before entering the secret realm, or they met in the secret realm. Later, Yan Jin gifted her with the scale...The scale had the magical effect of healing dead human skin and bones. What if she wanted to repair her looks?

Duan Ye didn't seem to care about the scars on her face, but what girl wouldn't want to be beautiful and intact?

Shen Zhixian let out a small sigh, thinking that he’ll have to try to come up with the best of both worlds.

Although he was deep in contemplation, the smile on Shen Zhixian’s face did not disappear.

Duan Yuan had summoned her mount in preparation to leave and didn’t pay attention to him. Yan Jin was always watching Shen Zhixian so only he witnessed all his joy.

So happy.

He watched Shen Zhixian. Although he wasn’t as easy-going as before, he still climbed to the flying fish's back in a fairly calm manner. Afterward, Yan Jin lowered his eyelids and followed suit.

Duan Yuan’s mount was a fluffy civet cat, which looked chubby but was in fact very flexible. Duan Yuan gave out a light command and the animal spread open its wings to take flight. It was no less impressive than the flying fish.

“My sect sisters preferred to use fairy cranes.” Because they were in mid-air and the wind was strong, she had to use a small technique to make sure they heard her. “They usually require fruits from time to time. I don’t like them very much.”

Fairy cranes looked impressive and gentle. Naturally, they were those female disciples' first choice. But, Duan Yuan was impatient with their delicateness.

She'd probably been out for a long time, far from the shackles of her sect, which allowed her innate temperament to shine through. When he first saw her, Shen Zhixian originally thought that she was gentle and graceful, but now he could see that she’d completely changed. Her every move was clearly very lively and chivalrous, her laughter crisp and hearty.

"I like this big fat cat ... No, it's not fat, it just looks fluffy, and it's actually very flexible." Duan Yuan rubbed the cat’s fluffy fur and squinted her eyes comfortably. "Ah, it's fun to rub."

Shen Zhixuan thought Duan Yuan was very interesting. He began to think that Duan Yuan’s temperament was also suitable for Yan Jin. Yan Jin was so quiet and taciturn. Wouldn’t it be good for him to have a lively and smart female lead?

Suddenly, a hint of sadness and melancholy rose up in him. He gently elbowed Yan Jin’s side, saying, “Why aren’t you responding to the girl?”

Because Shen Zhixuan was a little bit afraid, Yan Jin, as usual, set up a barrier around the flying fish. He sat beside Shen Zhixian, guarding him silently.

When he heard Shen Zhixian’s words, he looked over at him. A pair of deep, dark eyes stared at Shen Zhixian for a long while until Shen Zhixian inexplicably awkwardly rubbed the tip of his nose. Finally, Yan Jin turned to look at Duan Yuan and said, “The wind is strong here. He couldn’t hear what you’re saying so he can’t respond. Just travel on.”

Duan Ye heard him speak so many words for the first time. She paused for a while before she finally reflected on what he’d said. Although she was a little bit annoyed, she immediately responded pleasantly and didn’t speak again.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

Maybe, maybe the younger sister preferred this….kind of taciturn and cold male lead?

...…

They traveled south for several days, passing by many towns and villages, until these immortal cultivators felt the needed to take a break and stretch their legs.

It wasn’t until noon the next day when they finally decided to settle in a small town. They randomly found a restaurant and sat down. Sitting in a table next to them was a middle-aged cultivator with a tube of divination

sticks in his hand.

It was a disciple of Xuanji Tower.

With one glance, Shen Zhixian recognized his identity. He didn't know where this keen instinct came from, though it probably stem from the original's memory.

As its name suggested, Xuanji Tower [t/n: Xuanji = profound theory] was a sect that specialized in the study of heavenly metaphysics and was best at divination. Shen Zhixian recalled that during that time at Shilian Mountain, Sect Leader Wen's phantom had mentioned that a Xuanji Tower grandmaster had calculated the divinatory hexagram for him, saying that the calamity in his fate could not be avoided.

Thinking of Sect Leader Wen, Shen Zhixian couldn't help but think about Qingyun Sect. He wondered what the "Elder Shen" of Fifth Peak was doing right now. At least, there was still Fourth Elder to help cover for him.

While he was lost in thought, the Xuanji Tower cultivator, who'd been sitting bored waiting for his food, was looking them over. He saw Duan Yuan's xun instrument and Yan Jin's sword. Sensing their spiritual power, he spontaneously came over to their table. "Daoist friends, did you come here to find the secret realm?"

At the words "secret realm," Shen Zhixian snapped back to attention. His lips curved into a smile and he answered, "Why? Is Daoist friend also here for that reason?"

Of the three of them, Yan Jin was a silent, stuffy gourd while Duan Yuan was used to pretending to appear "gentle and graceful" to outsiders. Therefore, only Shen Zhixian was left to talk to others.

He had a beautiful appearance and an easy-going temperament, a combination of factors that proved helpful to putting people at ease.

The middle-aged man said "Oh" and exposed a satisfied expression,

"Naturally. That secret realm was rumored to have never been opened before. Who knew how many treasures could be found inside? It's only natural to try my luck."

He seemed to be more knowledgeable about the secret realm, Shen Zhixian secretly pondered. With a smile, he asked a few questions, trying to gain a better understanding.

It turned out that this secret realm had surfaced near Xin City several months ago, but it had yet to open. It only hovered in place, surrounded by a dense spiritual qi. This indicated how unusual this spiritual realm was.

As a result, a large number of cultivators flocked to it.

Many cultivators had gathered at Xin City, waiting for the secret realm to open. It happened that the owner of Xin City was a disciple of Xuanji Tower. After a long calculation, he finally concluded that the secret realm will open in the next few days.

“I hope to go in and take a look…” The middle-aged man touched his chin thoughtfully. “It was said to be a very old secret realm that had never appeared before. Who knows how rich it is.”

Not everyone could enter a secret realm. Some high-level secret realms would choose the people who could enter them. After all, the higher the level, the more good things hidden within and the higher the danger. If a cultivator was not up to standard, he or she won’t be able to enter.

This can be problematic, Shen Zhixian thought to himself. Although his cultivation stage was fairly high, his spiritual power was suppressed. He wasn’t certain he would be able to enter.

There were many people in the restaurant so the dishes were slow to appear. It was unknown which of Shen Zhixian’s words had caused the middle-aged man to check him. After learning that Shen Zhixian was an ordinary person with no spiritual power, he took a handful of divinatory sticks to calculate for Shen Zhixian.

“It remains to be seen whether you’re an ordinary person. How about I calculate for you? It’s not too strenuous to do these ordinary things for ordinary people.” He held the tube of divinatory sticks toward Shen Zhixian and motioned for him to draw three sticks “Since you’ve arrived at this point, maybe you’ll receive some unusual opportunities.”

Shen Zhixian’s eyes fell on the tube of divinatory sticks in the man’s hand. The tube looked different from the common tubes. It’s body was carved with extremely delicate patterns that looked like astrological signs. The jade divinatory sticks inside were also carved with complicated lines, each attached with a strand of spiritual force.

This was the cultivator’s weapons and also the tool he used for divination.

Anyway, Shen Zhixian was just sitting idle, and thinking it harmless, he pulled out three sticks with a great flourish. He glanced that the various patterns to re-affirm that he had no clue what they meant.

The middle-aged man from Xuanji Tower took the jade sticks and placed them on the table. The spiritual power within the sticks condensed into a thin, silken thread, connecting the three jade sticks together. As he mumbled, he fiddled with the sticks.

It didn’t take long for the middle-aged man to finish calculating the results. His voice sounded surprised as he said, “This is the first time I’ve seen such a good divinatory diagram. Regarding your trip, you’ll get what you wanted, ah!”

What people wouldn’t like listening to nice things. Although he didn’t know how the middle-aged man arrived at that conclusion, Shen Zhixian was still very happy to hear this. His smile widened, and he thanked the man.

The middle-aged man picked up the jade sticks and wondered out loud, “This really is the first time I’ve seen such a good divinatory diagram…”

Before the man could say anything else, the little waiter arrived with his

food.

After eating his meal, the middle-aged man took his tube of divinatory sticks, once again expressed surprise at Shen Zhixian's wonderful divinatory diagram, and left.

The three rested for a while before setting off again. The main reason why they rested for so long was because of Shen Zhixian. Because Yan Jin and Duan Yuan had spiritual power in their bodies, they didn't feel fatigued by the travel. Shen Zhixian, on the other hand, was like an ordinary person so he would naturally feel tired.

Now that they had a specific direction, the three rushed all afternoon straight toward their goal. At last, they finally arrived at Xin City before darkness fell.

Because the secret realm would soon open, many cultivators were swarming about. The inns were almost full, making it difficult to find one with vacancies. Luckily, they found two first-class vacant rooms that had remained empty due to their high price.

Shen Zhixian sighed when he heard the words "two rooms." Although he liked sharing a room with Yan Jin, he lamented that he won't have an opportunity to secretly sneak in some more reading time.

Some days ago, they'd stopped at an inn with many rooms. Therefore, the three of them slept in their own room. With Yan Jin gone, Shen Zhixian quietly read late into the night until he nearly finished the whole set of books.

He wanted more.

It was truly, very good.

Oh!

That kind of secret, subtle and syrupy emotions, like a warm March Spring

breeze tenderly caressing the face, really made people addicted and unable to stop.

In all honesty, he'd almost forgotten that the two protagonists were based off of Yan Jin and himself. He'd begun to think that the story was about others. Whenever he arrived at his favorite part, he would often read the passage twice.

Shen Zhixian vaguely felt that he'd forgotten something, but it didn't matter. He already decided to go back after this was all over to see if Qingyun Baixiaosheng had given birth to a new story. No other little things could stop him.

He didn't know which Qingyun Sect disciple this Qingyun Baixiaosheng was but he decided that, if he ever did find out, instead of punishing him to plant melons for three months, he would….lower it to only one month!

It was already deep into the night. Shen Zhixian climbed into bed, drowsily yawned, and asked as usual, "Are you sleeping here tonight?"

He'd meant to ask Yan Jin if he wanted to share this superior bed together. It'd cost more money so everything was very good. The bed was big enough for two people could sleep comfortably together. In Shen Zhixian's candid perception, they were brothers and it wasn't really a big deal for brothers to sleep together.

He wasn't an unmarried, chrysanthemum flower of a daughter, and so he didn't have to be so particular or think too much about it.

According to previous experiences when sharing the same room, after Shen Zhixian asked this question, Yan Jin would shake his head and spend the night meditating on a small, soft couch. Therefore, Shen Zhixian didn't pay too much attention to his response and merely prepare to lay down after asking.

However, today, who knew what Yan Jin had eaten. He actually said, "En," and calmly strode over.

Shen Zhixian had just laid down half-way when he saw Yan Jin walked over. He couldn’t respond for a long moment and only made a sound of surprise as he watched Yan Jin sat down next to him on the bed and told him the usual word. “Sleep.”

Shen Zhixian, who was trapped between Yan Jin and the wall, was confused. But, he subconsciously listened to Yan Jin’s words and laid down, even scooting over to make more room for him.

The candle went out with pfff, casting the room in sudden darkness.

Yan Jin laid down next to him, silent and calm.

Shen Zhixian took a while to adapt to the darkness, and then, for some reason, his body suddenly quivered. His awareness was so intense that his prior drowsiness completely and utterly dissipated.

Xixi: They’re sharing a bed! They’re finally sharing a bed! Will something happen? Is the mention of chrysanthemum (Chinese slang for the back hole) a foreshadowing, or am I just clutching at straws here?

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 33

The other person was breathing gently, as if this situation was an extremely common occurrence. He was so calm, but the person who uttered the invitation was the one who ended up feeling surprised and unsettled.

The bed was very specious. Despite the fact that they were lying down side by side, there was still half a foot of space between them. Shen Zhixian laid stiffly for a long time before regaining his senses and pulling the cover over himself.

The other person, who hadn’t spoken and hadn’t moved since lying down, finally reacted. He pulled the cover up to his lower abdomen, slightly tilted his head, and said in a low voice, “Sui Xian, good night.”

“Good night,” Shen Zhixian subconsciously responded. After watching the other person close his eyes, Shen Zhixian forced himself to calm down, straightened his sleeping position, and closed his eyes.

But his drowsiness was gone. Even with his eyes closed, he still could not sleep.

In the dark, without his vision, the other senses became magnified countless times. Shen Zhixian could clearly feel the heat emanating from Yan Jin, which made him keenly aware of the chill in his own body. He couldn’t help but feel the impulse to inch closer.

It’s all good. Calm down. Go to sleep. After all, it was just Yan Jin. It was perfectly normal for him to want to take a good rest after so many days without it.

He pinched himself under the cover, determined to force himself to dispel any distracted thoughts and welcome sleep. He laid for a long time, and finally...

Found that he still couldn’t sleep.

He wanted to turn over, to roll about, to banish the chill by rolling up in the comforter.

But Yan Jin was lying nearby. If he rolled around, he would disturb Yan Jin.

After so long, Yan Jin should have fallen asleep already….Shen Zhixian struggled with himself for a long time but, in the end, he couldn’t help it. He began to move carefully.

His movements were already very light, but it still disturbed Yan Jin. When a low, husky “Sui Xian” sounded, Shen Zhixian froze and then immediately apologized, “I still woke you up…”

“I wasn’t asleep,” Yan Jin said. In the darkness, he turned his head to the side. Spiritual power condensed in his eyes, allowing him to easily see Shen Zhixian’s action with the comforter. He asked, “Sui Xian, are you cold?”

“En…” Shen Zhixian said vaguely, shrinking into the bed again. The chill seemed to be internal, making him think his cold constitution was brought about by the heart damage. In fact, no matter how many comforters he used, he would still feel cold.

In the dark, he didn’t see that Yan Jin’s ears were turning red. He only heard Yan Jin calmly ask him, “Would you like to embrace?”

Ah?

Yan Jin’s stone was so calm, which was completely within Yan Jin’s style, that after hearing such words, Shen Zhixian couldn’t respond for a moment. He even suspected that he heard it wrong. He repeated doubtfully,

“Embrace?”

The person next to him moved. In the next moment, the young man leaned over, quickly hugged him across the comforter, then quickly retreated. He said in a calm voice, “Like this. An embrace.”

The warmth was so fleeting that Shen Zhixian had to restrain the urge to reach out and capture on to it. He coughed awkwardly. If not for the fact that he thought Yan Jin wasn’t able to see clearly in the dark, he would be glaring at him. “Why did you do that?!”

Yan Jin was silent for a moment, before he quietly said, “In the past, I used to feel cold when I fell asleep, so someone would hold me like that…”

In the past.

Shen Zhixian thought about it and asked, "Was it before you came to Qingyun Sect?"

"En."

“Was it a relative?”

“No.” Yan Jin denied decisively and paused before continuing, "It's a very important person."

“Ah.” Zhen Zhixian almost immediately remembered his identity as Sui Xian and how excited Yan Jin had been when they first met at the inn. He’d always thought that Yan Jin had mistaken him for someone else at first and then, later, regarded him as another “Sui Xian.”

That Sui Xian must be a person Yan Jin couldn't forget. Otherwise, even until now, he wouldn’t still be describing that person as “important.”

Never forget.

Shen Zhixian felt that, based on Yan Jin's indifferent attitude, the reason he

could receive Yan Jin’s gentleness at this moment was probably because his memory was still stained with that Sui Xian.

Shen Zhixian pushed his chin underneath the comforter, causing his voice to sound muffled. “When you came to join Qingyun Sect, why didn’t he accompany you?”

This time, Yan Jin didn’t speak for a long time. It wasn’t until Shen Zhixian’s eyes were drifting close and he was starting to become drowsy when he finally heard Yan Jin whisper, “I lost him...He lost me…”

His voice was so low that Shen Zhixian could not hear him clearly. Struggling to stay awake, he murmured, “What…”

Yan Jin only said, "Go to sleep."

In the darkness, he quietly gazed at Shen Zhixian, watching until he finally fell asleep, before he finally sighed.

“But this time, I will find him, Sui Xian,” he murmured. Stretching out his hand, he hovered his fingers over Shen Zhixian’s face. All he had to do was press down a little and he would be able to touch that fair, jade-like skin. But, he didn’t.

He faintly curled his fingers and held them suspended, wanting to touch but was afraid to. His eyes carefully and seriously traced Shen Zhixian’s features over and over again, as if deeply carving his image into his mind.

Perhaps, his palm was too warm, causing Shen Zhixian to sense the radiating heat. Shen Zhixian moved his face slightly, pressing his cheek into Yan Jin’s hand and unconsciously rubbing against his warm skin.

Yan Jin’s hand stiffened, even as an odd sense of familiarity suddenly surged in his heart, making him feel at a loss for a moment. He instinctively retracted his hand. As he looked at Shen Zhixian, his expression grew uncertain and his breathing increased.

With the warmth on his face suddenly gone, Shen Zhixian shifted unhappily. His eyebrows slightly rose and his eyelashes trembled faintly.

Yan Jin couldn’t help but held his breath, watching as Shen Zhixian’s closed eyes tightened, his body restlessly shifting under the comforter, before falling into a deeper, more peaceful slumber. But, Yan Jin dared not do anything anymore. So, he called up a warm little white silvergrass.

The little white silvergrass swayed and wobbled underneath the comforter until half of it covered Shen Zhixian’s body. It dilly-dallied for a bit before forming a mass to cover Shen Zhixian’s upper body and lying still.

Shen Zhixian was very satisfied. He cuddled the warm little white silvergrass, and his eyebrows faintly softened, as if he was being immersed in a beautiful dream.

.....

Because the secret realm was about to open, more and more people arrived in the city.

The three of them had discussed the matter of entering the secret realm. Duan Yuan and Yan Jin naturally wanted to try it. After all, this was such a rare opportunity. Therefore, the matter of Shen Zhixian joining them became a problem.

Duan Yuan said, “The secret realm is dangerous. Big Brother Sui has no spiritual power and doesn’t understand magic…”

"I'll wait for you outside." Shen Zhixian promised very easily, almost without hesitation.

Duan Yuan didn’t suspect him. She only smiled and said, “It’s very noisy here. If Big Brother Sui wanted to go somewhere else quieter, you can. Just leave a note for us.”

“En, okay.” Shen Zhixian smiled and nodded. He slowly, leisurely shook

his folding fan.

Yan Jin was keenly aware that he was up to something. He silently glanced at his master, feeling extremely skeptical of his words.

Duan Yuan only spent a small number of days with Shen Zhixian and didn’t know him well. But, Yan Jin knew his master very well. If Shen Zhixian didn’t want to enter the secret realm, he would have proposed to leave already. He’d never been the kind of person to like this kind of noisy and raucous environment.

But, Shen Zhixian insisted on waiting outside, not even mentioning once that he also wanted to enter the secret realm. With Shen Zhixian's innocent appearance, Yan Jin could not ask him outright. Of course, even if he did ask, his master would probably not say anything.

The secret realm had completely emerged. It was suspended in the air, hidden in a cloud of white mist that glowed faintly.

The fluctuating qi became more and more dense, indicating that the secret realm was about to open. In fact, many cultivators no longer returned to the inn, preferring to stand here in groups day and night.

After waiting for a few days like this, the secret realm finally quietly emitted a cloud of white mist. It finally opened.

The excited cultivators immediately rushed forward toward the opening hidden in white mist. Some cultivators were able to successfully enter. Meanwhile, others stood outside for a long time without any movements before finally being pushed away by the mass of white mist.

After Duan Yuan and Shen Zhixian bid farewell, she also tried her luck. The white mist wrapped her up and she gradually disappeared.

The female lead went in, and the male lead should follow. But….

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look at Yan Jin. This person had been

standing beside him since the secret realm opened and seemed to have no intention of going forward.

"Why aren’t you going?"

He was still waiting for Yan Jin to get in quickly, so he could quietly try to follow!

Yan Jin calmly met his gaze. Somehow, Shen Zhixian’s heart rate increased, afraid that his hidden plan had been seen through. He forced himself to calmly wave his folding fan. “Go on. I’ll wait for you to go in and then go back to sleep.”

The secret realm had opened at dawn, forcing Shen Zhixian to get up early. He was still slightly sleepy and even made a show of yawning to back up his reason for urging Yan Jin to hurry.

Before he could say anything else, Yan Jin looked down at him and straightforwardly asked, “Sui Xian, do you want to go in together?”

Shen Zhixian waved his fan and smiled casually. “I’m just an ordinary person. Forget it…”

“....” Yan Jin stopped talking, but he continued to look at Shen Zhixian with his deep, dark eyes.

Under such an intense gaze, Shen Zhixian felt as if he was on pins and needles.He gradually began to feel guilty, as if he’d done something wrong. He finally sighed, unable to stand it any longer. Yan Jin, this guy had been silent for so many days. It turned out that he was just waiting to stop him.

"Okay, okay, I just want to try it ... If you don't think it's right, I won't try it. I’ll just go back to the inn and sleep."

He snapped the fan closed and turned to leave. But, just as he turned around and was about to step away, his wrist was suddenly caught.

Yan Jin slowly wrapped his fingers around that slender wrist and gently pulled Shen Zhixian back to his side.

Shen Zhixian was caught off guard. Feeling taken aback, he took a step backward and bumped into Yan Jin. With one hand still wrapped around Shen Zhixian's wrist, Yan Jin encircled Shen Zhixian's waist with his other hand, holding him firmly.

"What are you doing--"

The words stopped abruptly. Shen Zhixian was stunned. Because, Yan Jin's warm breath had brushed against his ear and he said in a low, slightly helplessness voice, "Master."

Xixi: Omg! I'm so excited. We get a hug (brief, though it was) and finally, the gig is up. Although I've read this web novel from start to finish, a lot of the details have become vague so it's almost like I'm reading this for the first time. What is Shen Zhixian going to do now? Hehe..

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 34

For a moment the world was silent. The hustle and bustle surrounding them receded like a tide, and the flow of people blurred like an illusion. It seemed that only Yan Jin was real.

His word “Master” echoed in Shen Zhixian’s ears.

Shen Zhixian thought wryly, what about his disguise? What about his big disguise?

Countless thoughts tumbled chaotically in his mind, but only one thought remained in the end.

It would be better to give Yan Jin amnesia on the spot.

After acting as Sui Xian, Shen Zhixian still had no choice but to return as Yan Jin’s master. He calmly removed Yan Jin’s hand from his wrist and shoved his folding fan into Yan Jin’s hand. After taking a deep breath, he sincerely said, “Actually, I…”

——A sudden change emerged.

Perhaps, it was that no one paid attention, or that no one cared. The secret realm was stagnant, but the white fog spread out, scattering everywhere. A trail of mist silently curled around Shen Zhixian’s ankle and quickly climbed up along his hem.
The moment Shen Zhixian’s word “I” fell, he felt cold all over his body. All of a sudden, the white fog rapidly unfurled out and then swallowed him completely!

This happened in the blink of an eye. Yan Jin’s expression changed and he immediately reached out to catch Shen Zhixian, but his arms went through emptiness. There was nothing there. The fog seemed to be conscious, hiding from Yan Jin’s hand, and then quickly retreating.

Yan Jin pulled his sword out. Afraid that Shen Zhixian was still caught somewhere in the fog, he dared not split the fog directly. He could only cut a section off from the rest, temporarily blocking it from further retreat.

An extremely deep sword mark split the ground, still emitting the icy chill of Yan Jin’s sword intent. The fog fragment was scared witless. After a moment, it reared back and burst into countless tiny strands of mist, which then quickly drifted away.

Shen Zhixian, just like those who’d successfully entered the secret realm, had completely disappeared in front of everyone.

This pair of master and disciple had originally stood quite far from the entrance to the secret realm. As a result, this huge movement immediately attracted the public's attention.

Some people were uncertain about the nature of the fog and feared that they wouldn't be able to avoid it. Others wanted to enter the secret realm and, when they saw the fog drifting toward them, they were unafraid and wanted to be swallowed up by the fog. It was too bad that, to avoid the approaching cultivators, the fog quickly melted back to its source.

With deeply furrowed brows, Yan Jin strode to the place where everyone was trying to enter the secret realm. There was also a fog there, quietly waiting for the next cultivator. But, sensing Yan Jin’s presence, it suddenly grew frightened and immediately surged back in panic. Like the fog that had swallowed Shen Zhixian earlier, it hurriedly floated back toward the secret realm.

Yan Jin’s expression was cold and severe as he raised his ice sword and ruthlessly used his sword ray to trap the fog in place, peeling it down like a

radish into a small, tight dumpling.

“Where is that person?” Yan Jin’s raised his sword, the tip slanted toward the ground. His voice was cold enough to freeze the small fog dumpling into fragments of ice.

The fog pretended to be stupid and remained stiff and motionless.

Yan Jin was extremely worried about Shen Zhixian’s safety. Not wanting to waste any more time with words, he lowered his eyes and raised the sword.

His swordplay was taught by Shen Zhixian. Although Shen Zhixian’s sword techniques had always been carefree and elegant, Yan Jin’s current move was ruthless and violent. The cold and fierce sword intent could be felt by everyone standing nearby. The ice-cold sword ray sank into the boundless darkness in an instant.

Not far away in the mountain forest, on a large and sturdy tree, the lush leaves suddenly rustled. A moment later, a bald head popped out from within the green leaves.

“Ah, what’s that movement…”

He squinted a pair of tiny, cloudy eyes and peered in the direction of the secret realm. In his younger years, he'd committed a great many sins, and his eyes were not easy to use anymore. Now, they couldn’t see as well at a distance. But, no matter what the situation, he felt a sense of familiarity.

What fun thing was happening over yonder?

The bald monk swallowed the food in his mouth and emerged out from among the green leaves with a large steamed bun in one hand. He took a large bite from the steam bun, not caring that he'd also bitten off a piece of green leaf into his mouth.

He’d lived for a long time and his brain was probably rusty. He thought for a while and couldn’t remember what it was he was supposed to remember.

But, he felt that there was something wrong in his mouth.

He spit out the dregs of the residual leaf. Then, he looked down at the big bun in his hand, exclaiming suddenly, "My roast meat! My roast meat!"

He looked around nervously and retracted his head back into the green leaves. After some searching, he finally found his half piece of roasted meat on a protruding branch beside him.

The roast was as thin as the leaves, and it was only the size of half a mouthful. The bald monk pinched it down with two fingers, treating it like an incomparable treasure. He pressed it into the steamed bun, took a large bite, and chewed several times. His face twisted into an expression of delight. He forgot the strange movement from earlier and retracted his head back into the green leaves.

He'd stopped paying attention to the strange movement, but the situation at the other end near the secret realm was not so good.

The wind snapped coldly, echoing with strange sounds that would terrify anyone who heard it. If it were to be described, one would say that it sounded like the horrifying cries of demons.

The thick patch of fog took advantage of Yan Jin's inattention to slip away. The secret realm also seemed to have felt a great threat, causing it to shake violently. Before his sword ray could completely split the entrance, the closed door suddenly opened!

In that instant, countless spiritual qi swarmed out, assaulting the senses. Many people couldn't bear the collision and took a few steps back, their faces pale and blood streaming from the corners of their mouths.

Seeing that the entrance was yawning open, Yan Jin halted his action. But his ruthless and tyrannical sword ray had already flown out toward the mouth, where it became immersed in the fog and disappeared completely.

Although the entrance was wide open, it was difficult to see past the thick

fog on the inside. Someone struggled to get up, even crawling on the ground, but the cold fog blocked him, making it difficult for him to move any closer.

Yan Jin didn’t care about others. With a cold expression, he tightened his grip on his sword and strode into the secret realm.

After Yan Jin's slender figure completely disappeared into the fog, the opening slowly resealed, shutting off countless envious eyes and many whispers.

Within the secret realm, there was only a white, thick fog.

As soon as Yan Jin slashed his sword, those dense fogs were immediately frightened and quickly dissipated. After a while, a path was revealed.

Although he didn’t know where the path would lead to, Yan Jin lowered his eyes and strode forward without hesitation. While he urged the contract within his body, he maintained a close vigilance on his surrounding environment.

But, no matter how much he urged this time, the contract didn’t respond, almost as if it’d never existed. He could only let it off and focus on the dense fog all around him.

Within the fog, there was only silence. He didn’t know how long he’d walked, but suddenly, he heard a muted conversation that seemed to echo with no clear sign of its origin. It appeared to be the faint sounds of two people speaking.

A slightly elderly voice said, “He belonged to the boundless sea, moving free and easy. Your plan to trap and hold on to him will only hurt and sadden him. Why do you…”

A young man interrupted in a cold, hard and resolute voice, “Even if I have to break his fish tail and put chains on his two hands, I will make sure that he stays trapped forever at my side.”

“This is too willful!

The young man remained unmoved. His voice lowered, sounding slightly crazed as he murmured indignantly. “I’m willing to build thousands of illusions for him, creating the boundless sea, the sounds of wind and waves, the spoiled sun and the bright moon, the clouds and stars...all with no deficiency. All except one thing. I would never allow him to leave me.”

"Don't be obsessed!" The elderly man’s voice was both angry and helpless as he reprimanded, “In the end, illusions are still just illusions. How can you take it seriously?! Your mental state is tinted by devil qi!”

The last four words obviously touched the deepest part of the young man’s heart. He became enraged. His words were ruthless, malicious and despairing. “What about cultivating the devil’s path? The people who’d hurt me have all been killed by me. It was only that the one I love, I can’t get…”

“...I couldn’t get it. I couldn’t get it.” The young man continuously repeated this one line until his voice grew hoarse. “Entering the devil’s path, the devil’s path. I should have entered the devil’s path sooner!”

The white fog around Yan Jin suddenly violently roiled and surged. Strands of cold and powerful qi were tightly interwoven around the turbulent fog. Yan Jin's acute senses concentrated on the source. With his eyes narrowed, he immediately raised his hand and slashed his sword.

The white fog scattered in panic to avoid his strike, but it moved too late. It was shattered by the sword qi and, at once, the source of the voices appeared in front of Yan Jin’s eyes .

——It was a spirit pill, about half the size of a fist and looked like a pure red jade pearl.

When Yan Jin looked at the spirit pill’s glossy surface, he seemed to see scenes of countless human figures, intertwined and intermingled together. All indistinguishable and unclear. All the while, the lingering sound of a

devilish voice rasped in his ears.

His eyes, which reflected the spirit pill, turned red. The voice that had hidden at the deepest part of his heart and had not appeared in a long time suddenly became active again, shouting in harmony with the young man's roar.

Fine threads of black qi drifted silently from the spirit pill and floated toward Yan Jin, coiling around his body and refusing to leave, settling in like bone gangrene. The black marks embedded into him like scars, ruthlessly and painfully digging under his skin.

The countless insults, abuses, and tortures. The countless times he'd suffered, homeless and miserable. All kinds of memories whirled chaotically in his mind. There were people from his previous life, people from this life, people who were strange and unfamiliar. They all intertwined into an indistinguishable mass.

Yan Jin perceived this dire turn of event. He tried to raise his sword to destroy the spirit pill, but a vague, black mist had wrapped around him, curling around his wrist, applying a heavy, almost physical pressure to prevent him from raising his hand.

The hand holding the sword's hilt clenched tighter and with increasingly more strength, such that blue tendons on his hand bulged. Yan Jin gritted his teeth and fought against the voices.

Fake, they were all fake….Between the various flashes of memories, Yan Jin struggled to maintain his last trace of clarity, telling himself over and over again that the old things in the previous life had passed. What was true was right now.

Master had said, cherish the present and don't hurt the innocent…

Don't hurt the innocent...Master said...Sui Xian....

Before his eyes was a scene washed in scarlet. The previous life, dyed with

blood and shattered spirit qi, coated the tip of a sword. The image lingered in his mind, repeated again and again, until he became muddleheaded with it. Yan Jin sensed himself being picked up shakily and, with a burst, he was tossed recklessly somewhere.

“Just throw it away. Anyway, he’s just a waste.”

“Alright. Let’s go back to report the completion of our task….”

The two strange voices gradually drifted away. Yan Jin's heart trembled. Was this a memory?

This was the memory from his previous life, after his spirit root was severed?!

Realization was at the tip of his mind. He tried to trace it back to the chaos, but before he could grasp a fragment, it seemed to elude him. For a moment, he was at a loss and was nearly overturned by the strange voices.

No!

He didn’t know where Master was and whether he was safe. He had to find Master.

Yan Jin lifted the sword with great difficulty and held the sharp blade’s edge against the palm of his hand. He swiped lightly, causing blood to suddenly flow out. He clung to the pain as he resisted the erosive and strange voices.

In his mind, Shen Zhixian’s voices pierced through the countless noise, sounding soft and gentle as he said, “....Master presents you with this sword, not to make you afraid, but for you to be able to raise this sword against those who want to bully you.”

The sword. That’s it!

Yan Jin gritted his teeth and raised his sword before his last trace of clarity was subverted.

This time, he used Shen Zhixian’s swordplay. The wind was clear, the moon was bright, the sword was light, and the sword was free. The sword ray swirled up like a cold breeze, dispelling the gloomy and cold haze.

All the chaotic noises came to an abrupt end as the sword's ray fell across the the scarlet spirit pill. It seemed to freeze momentarily before abruptly shattering into powder.

Yan Jin panted as he fell to one knee, using the sword as support. He narrowed his eyes, calming his inner turmoil.

Just now, everything had happened too suddenly. The tangled, chaotic mess of information was too shocking. He was too busy trying to regain stability and so he didn’t hear it. Within the depths of his sea of knowledge, an inaudible crack appeared, splitting a seam in the invisible barrier.

Strands of black qi drifted out from the thin slit and quietly merged into his vast sea of spiritual qi, blending in and melding with the pure spiritual powers within.

If Yan Jin was looking inside at this moment, he would see that what was exposed behind the slit was a hint of red.

It was almost the same color as the spirit pill, only clearer and redder.

…….

On Shen Zhixian’s side, after the white fog unexpectedly swallowed him into the secret realm, he was worried about possible danger and immediately brought out the various lifesaving items from his storage bag.

Because of his lack of spiritual power, he deliberately brought out many simple and easy-to-use instruments. Unless the the other party was powerful enough to destroy the world, it wouldn’t be a problem for him to escape.

Fortunately, the white fog didn't seem to be malicious to him. After

dropping him here, it ignored him and drifted about before finally fusing with the large white fog around.

The white fog was so thick that no sounds could be heard. He had no spiritual power and could not use divine knowledge to detect his surroundings. He could only hold the life-saving weapons and proceed cautiously.

The path under his feet seemed to be endless. Shen Zhixian walked for a long time and, let alone a person, he couldn’t even glimpse any other living creatures. But, a faint sound drifted into his ears.

It was the sound of the sea breeze rolling and of the waves tumbling, one after another. It seemed to come from a distance, circulating back and forth and never ending.

Shen Zhixian listened intently, and within the sound of the waves, he faintly heard a melodious and clear singing.

The singing was too far away and was intermittently drowned by the sea breeze and the crashing waves. Only the words passed to Shen Zhixian's ears, and Shen Zhixian ... didn't understand.

This was a mysterious, ancient language that carried with it a leisurely charm. Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered the mermaid and his heart jerked. He continued to move forward.

A large mass of fog in front of him seemed to have suddenly met something terrible and spread out in a hurry, exposing an open road and a slender figure with a sword in his hand. His back was very familiar.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes brightened. It was a joy to meet someone he knew, even if this person had just peeled away his disguise earlier.

He yelled "Jin" and was prepared to complete the rest of his words. But, Yan Jin heard his shout and turned slowly.

Shen Zhixian's footsteps suddenly stopped.

The cold-looking young man still looked the same, but he saw ...

A pair of cold red eyes.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 35.1

When Yan Jin looked over at that moment, Shen Zhixian's heart tightened, and his footsteps immediately paused.

The slender young man held a sword in his hand as he turned indifferently. When he saw it was Shen Zhixian, his expression slightly eased and he said, "Master."

This “master” was said very naturally, with no difference from the past. Shen Zhixian settled down and took a step toward him. Then, he began to slowly walk over, saying, "You have also entered the secret realm..."

He stared at Yan Jin closely, without any expression on his face. But Yan Jin was the same as usual. Except for the fact that his eyes were a bloody red, he was no different.

Seeing Shen Zhixian come over, Yan Jin slid his sword back into its sheath. A pair of clear and red eyes shifted over and he softly asked, “Master is not injured?”

"No." Shen Zhixian's gaze dropped to Yan Jin’s bloody hand, and he paused. "What's wrong with your hand?"

He held Yan Jin's wrist very naturally and looked at the wound on his palm. In order to clear his head, Yan Jin had cut a wound that was fairly deep. The entire palm was covered in blood. At this time, the blood had almost congealed, looking quite pitiful.

Shen Zhixian frowned and pulled a handkerchief from inside his breast

pocket, intending to patch the wound up for Yan Jin.

Just as he was about to use the handkerchief to wipe away the blood, Yan Jin’s wrist jerked to block Shen Zhixian’s movements. He pulled his hand away and said, “It was only accidentally cut. A minor injury. Master needn’t worry.”

Shen Zhixian’s eyebrows tightened, and he said disapprovingly, "Such a big wound, how can anyone manage?”

Yan Jin shook his head slightly, dropped his hand to his side, and slightly raised the finger of his other hand toward the distance. “It’s not important. Master, this place is strange. Let’s go over there and take a look.”

Shen Zhixian looked at him for a moment without moving. Finally, he said, “Does A’jin mind me concealing my identity? It wasn’t originally my intention. When I saw you that day, I just suddenly thought of it.”

Yan Jin tilted his head to look at him. His expression was serious as he assumed the differential posture that a disciple would have toward his master. “Master can do whatever he wants.”

Shen Zhixian’s eyes narrowed slightly.

After a while, he turned around and walked in the opposite direction that Yan Jin was pointing at, saying, “I saw some interesting things when I came from back there. It’s good that you’re here. Let’s go take a look together.”

He didn’t bother waiting for Yan Jin to respond. After taking a few steps, he heard Yan Jin following—not too far nor too close, just following a few steps behind.

Shen Zhixuan squeezed a jade pendant in his hand and continued walking calmly.

Although he was going back the same way, it ended up being different from when he came.

The dense fog gradually dissipated, revealing the usual mountain forest filled with flowers, grasses, trees and stones, mud-covered roads, and even quite a few fuzzy footprints, which looked like human footprints.

Shen Zhixian put down his vigilance a little, thinking that these people would not be difficult to deal with.

As soon as he thought this, he heard faint, noisy voices coming from a distance.

Shen Zhixian couldn’t help but quicken his pace. He only walked a short distance before the woods suddenly dropped away and he came upon a clearing. Not far away, six to seven young people were squatting on the roadside, busy digging in the mud and joking loudly.

“Ah! Spirit fig fruit!” One of the gray robe men suddenly shouted in surprise. He dropped the wooden branch in his hand and carefully pulled out a palm-sized green grass.

The grass had a small yellow-orange fruit at the root. It was only the size of his finger, but he took it as a treasure. He handled it very carefully, but it was clear that he couldn't wait to clean off the mud on it and put it in his mouth.

He simply swallowed it whole, without chewing, and sat down on his knees, digesting the fruit.

Everyone around him was attracted by his shout, and not only did they not despise him, but they even gave envious sighs.

"This guy is really lucky. He can find good things every time ..."

“Exactly! He’s an advanced cultivator. It’s obvious that he’s very determined!"

"Ha ha ha ha ha, right ... Hey, I'm afraid there’s nothing left here. How

about we go over there..."

The group went away without disturbing the man who was meditating in place.

That fruit was actually just a general fig fruit, with some spiritual qi but not much. After the man in the gray robe finished digesting it, he opened his eyes, saw the empty space around, laughed, patted the dirt on his shirt indifferently, and stood up.

As he was about to leave, he suddenly seemed to perceive something. As soon as he turned around, he accurately looked toward the movements Shen Zhixian was making.

"Ah?" He hesitated in confusion, as if surprised by the sudden appearance of people here. After looking at them for a moment, he finally came over, and greeted them. "Are you new here? I've never seen you before."

Shen Zhixian was about to respond but suddenly realized what was happening. He swallowed back the words he was going to say. The man in the gray robe was watching Yan Jin from beginning to end.

In his words, there is only a singular "you", not a plural you.

Yan Jin didn't seem to notice anything out of the ordinary. When he saw that Shen Zhixian wasn't responding, he quietly answered the gray robe man's words. "En."

His tone was cold but the gray robed man didn't seem to care. His eyes flitted between them and the road, and he asked with interest, "You came from over there. Did you see any good stuff?"

"None."

The man in the gray robe clapped his hands and invited, "So let's go together? My companions have all left and being by myself is also very boring. We can talk with each other on the road."

This decision wasn’t something Yan Jin could make himself. He tilted his head to Shen Zhixian and asked softly, "Master, what do you think? "

After Jin Yan asked this sentence, the gray robed man looked shocked. He shot a puzzled, uncertain look in Shen Zhixian’s direction and asked, “....Who are you talking to?”

When he was looking at him in confusion, Shen Zhixian pursed his lips and stretched out his hand to wave before his eyes.

The man in the gray robe didn't blink, as if he couldn't see Shen Zhixian at all. After looking around for a long time, he turned his gaze back to Yan Jin. "There’s someone...here?"

When he heard this, the hair on Shen Zhixian’s body stood on end.

When Yan Jin didn't answer his words, the man frowned and wondered for a while, before he suddenly realized. "Ah! I see, this is a newcomer!"

The man laughed. "Look at my memory, almost frightened myself. All newcomers are like this. We’ll be able to see them after a while. Let’s go together?"

He seemed really afraid of solitude and insisted on inviting Yan Jin to go with him. He didn’t even flinch when Yan Jin only looked at him coldly.

Shen Zhixian asked, "What does he mean by newcomers? What will happen after a while?

His voice was not small. Because the man in the gray robe kept talking, Shen Zhixian deliberately raised his voice. But, it was as if the man didn't hear him and continued talking.

Shen Zhixian yanked Yan Jin's sleeve.

So Yan Jin repeated the question, interrupting the man’s long story.

“Oh, people who are new here are invisible. It’ll take a while for them to show." The man in the gray robe scratched his head and added, "Might take days, months, or even years. The more powerful, the less likely they’ll be seen earlier.”

"What is the principle? How many days, months, and years?...How long have you been here? "

This question stumped the man in the gray robe. He pondered for a while but still seemed unsure. "I don't know what's going on. Anyway, I've known these things for a long time. As for how long I’ve been here...It's been a long time."

He counted for a while, but he couldn't seem to remember the time at all. In the end, he waved his hand as if he didn't care. "How long I’ve been here. There are a lot of spiritual qi here, and there are many good things. As long as I can stay...How long doesn’t matter...Let’s go together! ”

Shen Zhixian turned countless thoughts in his mind and finally followed the man in the gray robe.

Of course, Yan Jin wouldn't refute his decision. Seeing him move, he followed suit.

The man in the gray robe was overjoyed, thinking that the newcomer must be unfamiliar with this place, so he naturally walked in front and said, "You don't know because you just arrived, how precious this place is. We just dug a spirit fig... "

He murmured, boasting here and there, fully expressing his desire to linger. As Shen Zhixian listened and made Yan Jin repeat a few questions, his thoughts deepened.

This group of people must have been here for years at least. This was by no means a person who’d just entered the secret realm today.

But there were rumors in the outside world that this secret realm had never been opened! No one had even seen this secret realm!

Where did these people come from? No matter how good the secret realm was, there were no witnesses. They'd stayed for so many years. Were they not willing to leave?

Or were they unable to leave at all?

"How did you get into this secret realm?"

"How did I get in? Ah, it depends on whether you're lucky or not. I was going around at that time, and suddenly I saw this secret realm...Hmmmm..." After a moment of contemplation, he described, "It sent down a lot of fog that rolled towards me. I just felt cold and then was brought in."

It was exactly the same experience he'd had!

Shen Zhixian's contemplation became more and more deep. He no longer spoke but quietly listened to the man in the gray robe. They also met several people along the way, and the man clearly knew them. He greeted them with familiarity, before they all went on their way.

The three of them walked together and soon came upon a stream.

The stream was clear, and a big deer was lowering its head upstream, drinking water.

The man suddenly became even more spirited. He happily made a gesture for silence. "Shh, we'll have a good mouthful today."

He observed for a while. When he saw the deer lowered its head to drink water, momentarily setting aside its vigilance, he pounced. With five fingers stiffened into claws, and a cold and weird looking black gas lingering at his fingertips, he suddenly jumped over. He simply grabbed the deer's neck and twisted it fiercely!

One death blow!

The deer screamed without sound and died. The man grabbed the antlers and dragged it over to ask for credit. "This thing is very good! It's delicious!"

He couldn't see Shen Zhixian and stepped into his way without scruples. Shen Zhixian calmly retreated two steps to avoid him.

The man in the gray robe dragged the deer over and threw it to the ground, telling them with kind intentions, "The things here, no matter what, the neck is the most fragile. It can die with a twist... If you encounter it in the future, just twist the neck. That's it. "

He hummed and started to deal with the deer. Shen Zhixian watched as he reached for a knife and expertly peeled the skins and bones. Then, Shen Zhixian calmly took another two steps back.

That deer ...

It was not a deer at all!

Xixi: If a chapter is 8 or more pages long, it'll get split up as evenly as possible.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 35.2

In the gray robed man’s eyes, he held a bloody deer head. But, in Shen Zhixian’s eyes, it was just a gray skeleton head!

As for the deer… It was just a thick black qi that had compact into near solidity.

The man cut a few large pieces of black flesh and said, "I'll go clean it." After saying this, he went to the side of the stream to clean the blood.

After washing and cleaning, he let out a sound of delight. His clawed hand slammed into the water, and caught a long-armed swimming fish.

"A fat and tender fish!" he happily praised. He effortlessly twisted the fish head and threw it aside, and then began to clean the rest of the fish.

The fish head fell into Shen Zhixian’s line of sight. It was a skeleton of a fish head, without blood or flesh.
After a while, the man in the gray robe tidied up, pulled Yan Jin over to start a fire, and began grilling the fish.

He seemed to be very accustomed to these things. As if falling into a routine, he began to turn the fish back and forth, nibbling on a piece here and there as he worked. Then, he comforted Shen Zhixian while grilling. "You’ve just arrived, but even though we can’t see you, you can still eat.”

Shen Zhixian watched him gobbled up the weird black qi. It looked incredibly creepy—No no no no! Forget it. He didn't want to eat such strange things!

As he was just thinking this, Yan Jin also began to eat the meat in silence.

Compared to the man in the gray robe, he ate very well. As usual, Shen Zhixian pursed his lips and said nothing.

"Delicious?" While the man in the gray robe was enjoying himself, he couldn't help but vaguely boast, "So good! It's really a pity you're not eating ..."

He raised his head and grinned in Shen Zhixian's direction. Shen Zhixian's spine suddenly stiffened, then relaxed after a moment.

—A skull.

Only for a brief moment, the head of the man in the gray robe became a skull.

There was no blood or flesh, only a black cloud lingering on it. Shen Zhixian didn't know if it was originally his, or if he'd eaten it.

Creepy.

The situation was unknown and Shen Zhixian didn't want to make any rash decisions. Fortunately he hadn't eaten and drank these weird things.

Shen Zhixian, who could not eat and drink, sat quietly aside, waiting for the two people who could eat and drink to eat and drink. By then, it was almost dark.

This place wasn't a good resting place so, afterward, the three of them moved on. Finally, they came upon a relatively clean place and decided to rest there.

The man in the gray robe occupied a tree, while Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin sat under the same tree, resting against the trunk.

Shen Zhixian closed his eyes, camouflaging his breath so that it appeared slow and long, as if he'd fallen asleep. All the while, he was secretly watching the surrounding movements with great vigilance.

Nothing happened for half of the night. Shen Zhixian was tense for a long time, making him somewhat exhausted. Only by constantly pinching his palms, could he barely stay awake. Suddenly, Yan Jin moved slightly.

His movements were barely noticeable, but Shen Zhixian had been guarding him at all times, watching his movements at all times. At this moment, Shen Zhixian's mind jerked to attention and he immediately put down his sleepiness.

Yan Jin didn't do anything. He carefully observed Shen Zhixian, his calm and indifferent gaze moving over his body from head to toe. After a moment, he raised his hand.

Shen Zhixian immediately crushed the jade pendant that he'd been holding.

This jade pendant looked extremely hard, but in fact, it was just a thin shell with a lot of spiritual power inside. After Shen Zhixian shattered it, the spiritual power moved around him instantly, forming a short-term barrier, which then blocked Yan Jin's hand.

A slight zttt sound, like the sound of meat being roasted on the fire. Yan Jin quickly retracted his hands. A pair of red eyes stared tightly at Shen Zhixian for half a moment before he quietly settled back into place.

Shen Zhixian breathed a sigh of relief.

The next morning, the three took a short break before the man in the gray robe led them away again.

Shen Zhixian didn't move and muttered to himself for a moment. He casually said to Yan Jin, "Let's separate. This way, we can find more good things faster."

He thought that Yan Jin wouldn’t agree and began to think about what he should say next. Who knew that Yan Jin would unexpectedly agree. He nodded almost instantaneously. "If Master wants to separate, then let’s separate."

Shen Zhixian looked with certainty at Yan Jin for half a while. The latter looked the same as usual, and his eyes were still respectful. Seeing Shen Zhixian so still, he spoke again. "What's wrong, Master?"

"Nothing." Taking a direction opposite to them, Shen Zhixian began to walk away.

At first, he walked calmly and naturally until he bypassed the road. After confirming that the two people behind him could no longer see him, he then quietly accelerated his pace.

Yan Jin ...

He was almost certain that Yan Jin was a fake. He didn't know why someone would pretend to be Yan Jin.

Shen Zhixian didn't feel any malicious intent from this fake Yan Jin, but it appeared that this fake Yan Jin had no good intentions toward him either. He seemed to be determined to lead Shen Zhixian somewhere...

He didn’t know where the real Yan Jin was but he assumed that Yan Jin should have also entered the secret realm. Shen Zhixian thought quickly that he needed to find Duan Yuan!

He walked fast. The surrounding scenes were similar, and he couldn't tell which way was safe. It seemed to be a matter of luck. He walked for half an hour, but when he reached the other side, he was shocked and stopped suddenly—

The scene from earlier was repeated.

Not far from the path spreading out, a familiar figure appeared before him

again.

Shen Zhixian only glanced at him and turned without hesitation to go in the other direction, but this time, after only taking a few steps, there was another shadow standing there.

After changing directions several times in a row, the scenes were all the same.

Shen Zhixian stopped, and then he heard many footsteps coming from all directions—Those "Yan Jin" were approaching him!

He took a deep breath, chose a certain direction, and ran away!

The last time he ran this way without spiritual power, it was just after he’s transmigrated and was heading to the Cliff of Reflection to see little Yan Jin. Shen Zhixian began to grow out of breath, finding an odd sense of joy in his suffering. But, fortunately, he knew his own ability. It was a good thing he’d been consciously exercising himself.

Otherwise he would have fallen down already!

Those "Yan Jin" also seemed to know that he’d ran away. They chased behind him, and Shen Zhixian could hear their voices: empty, calm, indifferent, and low.

"Master ..."

"The disciple is here ..."

“It’s dangerous there…”

"Come here..."

When he heard these, Shen Zhixian’s scalp tingled. There was a "Yan Jin" who sounded like he was approaching in the direction in which Shen Zhixian ran out. As a result, he was the one closest to him. Shen Zhixian

could even hear the sound of his clothes being blown by the wind.

As if it was within easy reach.

This was very bad. Shen Zhixian hurriedly looked back, and sure enough, the red-eyed and indifferent "Yan Jin" was already very close to him. All that was needed was a few more steps and he would be able to reach out—

Before him, the road forked out, the path heading into the mountains. There was a small hill on the roadside with the situation on the other side of the hill completely invisible to him. Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth and made a decisive turn at the bend.

As soon as he turned, a figure flickered in front of him. He was caught off guard and smashed into him!

Due to the physiological reaction that followed the hard impact, Shen Zhixian’s eyes turned red almost instantly. His nose instantly became sore and he gasped.

Before he had time to react, the “Yan Jin” behind him had already caught up to him. The person he’d just bumped into decisively wrapped an arm around his waist, pulling him to the side, while slashing his sword.

The sword instantly split into “Yan Jin,” who immediately scattered into black mists that drifted away with the wind.

Shen Zhixian's heart fluttered, and he couldn’t tell whether it was because he’d run too hard or because he was too nervous.

He gasped and looked up slowly at the man holding him.

Another Yan Jin.

Xixi: I posted an extra chapter so don't forget to press next. XD

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 36

Before Shen Zhixian had time to speak, a group of fake Yan Jin had reached them. The scene that followed was quite spectacular.

Yan Jin, who was holding him, pressed his lips tightly together. With one hand wrapped around Shen Zhixian’s waist, he evaded the other Yan Jins while not hesitating to attack with the sword in his other hand. The sword ray immediately shattered those fake Yan Jins into countless strands of black mists that spread out and disappeared after a while.

As Shen Zhixian was being moved around, because of his lack of security, he subconsciously hugged Yan Jin's waist: "..."

His poor waist!

Felt like it was going to be cut off!

After the black mists had all cleared and everything had settled down, Yan Jin landed on the ground steadily and loosened his hand.

When Shen Zhixian watched TV series in the past and saw the male lead holding the female lead while flying about and fighting, it’d seem so romantic and awe-inspiring. All fake! Being held like that made him feel as if his waist was on the verge of snapping!

After gasping for breaths a few times, Shen Zhixian regained his sense of clarity. He wondered if this Yan Jin was real so he subconsciously pinched the Yan Jin in front of him.

But he didn’t realize where he was pinching. Immediately after feeling the pinch, Yan Jin’s waist stiffened. Yan Jin calmly held him and said in a quiet, slightly helpless voice, "Master, don't pinch."
Only then did Shen Zhixian react. His hand stiffened before he hurriedly dropped his hand and took a step back. He coughed. “Wasn’t it because I was afraid you’re also fake...After being chased by a few fake Yan Jins, I’ve had enough.”

His heart had been wary for a while now and, finally, he could feel at ease. Although this Yan Jin and those Yan Jins all looked the same, he knew that those were fake and this person in front of him was real.

Yesterday’s fake Yan Jin also looked the same. But, although his expressions were very similar, his behavior was slightly off. The real Yan Jin would never stay in the same place when he meets Shen Zhixian. With everyone else, he would. But with Shen Zhixian, he would be the one to take the first step.

He didn’t want Shen Zhixian to touch his wound because he was afraid that Shen Zhixian would discover that his wound was just an illusion. Afterward, Shen Zhixian had used the issue of him concealing his identity to sound Yan Jin out…

Shen Zhixian lowered his head to look at Yan Jin's hand but didn’t see any wound. Soon afterward, his churning mind became quickly suppressed by the two words "concealing identity."

If it was just concealing his identity, it wouldn’t be too bad… But, not only did he conceal his identity, he’d also fabricated his identity into Yan Jin’s cousin.

Thinking of this, Shen Zhixuan’s brain began to hurt. He just wanted to go back in time to that moment and give his brain a hard and calm look.

He stole a quick glance at Yan Jin and carefully considered his words. "A’jin, about me concealing my identity, in fact..."

In fact, there was no reason. Shen Zhixian got stuck, paused for a moment, and just broke the jar. "... I didn't think about it properly. Don't mind it. A’jin, just forget about it."

He thought Yan Jin would be angry. Even from childhood to now, this person with facial paralysis wouldn’t show it even if he was angry. But he never expected that when Yan Jin heard him, a smile would flash across his clear, bright eyes. It was so fleeting that if Shen Zhixian wasn’t paying close attention, he would have missed it altogether.

Shen Zhixian didn't dare to squeak. His head was full of thoughts. Was this the legendary angry smile?

He didn't speak, and so Yan Jin opened his mouth. His tone was calm and placid as usual, but there was a faint gentleness interwoven in every word. "During this time, the disciple had been very happy. It seemed that I’d also inadvertently offended Master. Please forgive me."

Shen Zhixian didn’t want to hear himself being called Master at this moment. When he heard it, he’ll remember his current appearance in front of Yan Jin... It made him wonder when Yan Jin knew and how long he'd known his real identity.

Truth be told, he didn’t really want to know and he didn’t dare ask. So, he only tilted his head uncomfortably, pretending a calm he didn’t feel. “It’s not easy revealing my identity outside. If you don’t mind it, then don’t call me Master.”

“Ok.” Yan Jin answered almost immediately. After his voice fell, he asked softly, “Then…. what should disciple call you?”

Shen Zhixian vaguely felt that something had changed in Yan Jin. It wasn't obvious and was, in fact, a bit elusive. He thought hard, but he still couldn’t think of what it might be, so he said vaguely, "Just like those other days."

This obviously meant that Yan Jin could continue to call him Sui Xian. Yan Jin pursed his lips slightly, and his eyes were bright as he said, “Sui Xian.”

"En, that’s fine." Shen Zhixian couldn't figure out anything, so he didn't think about it anymore. He looked around the illusion and decided to focus his attention.

Better to focus on this strange secret realm first. “After I entered this secret realm…”

He told a short story, going over the strange things that had happened to him. Afterward, he frowned and asked Yan Jin, "How did you get into the secret realm? What strange things did you encounter?”

Yan Jin, adhering to his silent nature, said in a few words about what happened at that time.

"You opened the secret realm before entering?" Shen Zhixian couldn't help but sigh. Yan Jin was indeed the male lead. Very powerful. "You didn’t see the source of those two voices?"

Without batting an eyelid, Yan Jin maintained his usual calm as he concealed the events concerning the red spirit pill. He only said: "...I didn’t see. After walking for a while in the fog, I arrived here.”

Shen Zhixian thought a moment about how they’d arrived at this makeshift road. “Let’s go and explore.”

He turned and walked on. However, he soon realized that Yan Jin hadn’t followed. Turning back, he asked doubtfully, “What’s wrong?”

Yan Jin asked in a serious voice, "Want to hold hands? "

Shen Zhixian: "???"

He immediately remembered that time when they’d slept together for the first time. Yan Jin had asked, “Do you want to embrace?” Finally, he reacted in shock.

When did Yan Jin become so active and open? When they slept together at that time, even though Yan Jin didn’t know his identity, he at least took Shen Zhixian as his cousin. It made sense. But, now that Shen Zhixian’s disguise had been revealed, he still dared to ask such a question...

It really surprised Shen Zhixian.

He instinctively asked, "Why hold hands?"

"It’s dangerous here," Yan Jin said, looking as serious as if he was studying some advanced swordsmanship. "I’m afraid we might lose each other."

Yan Jin’s usual silent, serious nature was too deeply rooted in Shen Zhixian’s mind. As a result, Shen Zhixian didn't suspect anything. Besides, there was some truth to what he’d said.

This secret realm was too weird. There were many real and fake things. If they didn’t hold hands… Who knew if the person they see when looking back would be the real person!

But holding hands seemed rather inconvenient. He pondered for a moment, then touched his head with his hand. But, he didn’t find what he was looking for.

When Shen Zhixian was still at Qingyun Sect, he used to hold his hair back with a hair ribbon. Later, when he went down the mountain to practice, he’d taken it out so as to appear more chivalrous. And then, he forgot to bring the hair ribbon with him… A minor miscalculation.

He retracted his hand somewhat regretfully. As he was mulling over whether he should tear off a piece of cloth or just forget about it, Yan Jin seemed to have read his mind. He pulled out a ribbon with a flowing cloud pattern, adorn with a small jade.

Yan Jin handed the ribbon to Shen Zhixian. "Use this."

The ribbon was a bit familiar. Shen Zhixian thought about it for a moment,

then remembered that this was the item that Yan Shen had thrown into the Hidden Sword Pavilion, causing Yan Jin to recklessly break into it.

This ribbon should be very important to Yan Jin. Right now, they hadn’t reached the point of absolute desperation. How could he be willing to take it out?

He took the brocade ribbon, looked at it, and said, “It looks familiar…”

Yan Jin gazed at him, and a complex emotion flashed through his eyes. He said in a low voice, "Sui Xian, don’t you remember? ”

This question seemed to have some other meaning, but Shen Zhixian didn't perceive it. He only inadvertently glanced at Yan Jin's expression. But somehow he felt as if he’d wronged Yan Jin. This feeling came so suddenly that his mind went blank for a moment.

He immediately shifted his gaze back to the brocade ribbon, suppressing the strange emotion. He tried to ignore Yan Jin's burning eyes and pretended to contemplate the ribbon. He suddenly said, “Ah, this is the brocade ribbon that fell in the Hidden Sword Pavilion that year? This should be very important to you. What if we ended up breaking it….?”

Yan Jin quietly said, "It's very important. But Sui Xian is more important."

This sentence caught Shen Zhixian off guard, and he inexplicably found himself blushing--Hey, Yan Jin, what kind of answer was that?!

Those who knew that Yan Jin went out to practice, and even those who didn’t know, would wonder what mysterious places had taught him such sweet words!

Shen Zhixian didn’t dare say anything or ask any questions. He quickly lifted the brocade ribbon and tied each ends of the long ribbon to their respective wrists. He tried it tight enough that it wouldn’t be easy to undo.

Where they should go, Shen Zhixian also didn’t know. But, it didn’t matter.

After all, the person standing next to him was the protagonist of this world!

So Yan Jin chose a direction at random, and they walked forward side by side, their wrists tied together with a length of ribbon.

.....

This place was really weird. The mountains, rivers, water, trees and flowers looked normal. But, there was always a strange black qi scattered about.

They walked for several days but they neither found a way out nor saw anyone again.

Shen Zhixian didn’t know if a long time had passed or if it was due to some other reasons, but he began to increasingly more tired. His drowsiness kept rising and, sometimes, when he walked, he would fall asleep on his feet.

After resting for the night, he should clearly be more alert during the day. But, he couldn’t push away his fatigue. When night came, he would sleep easily and for long periods of time.

Early this morning, Yan Jin had to call him for a long time before he finally woke up. Waking up was also like pushing through quicksand. He felt tired and weak and leaned against Yan Jin’s arms. It took him a long time to fully wake up.

He thought that this constant fatigue was due to his heart ailment. Therefore, in the past few days, he didn’t even need Yan Jin to urge him to eat Fourth Elder’s elixir three times a day. Although he didn’t get a heart attack, the drowsiness became increasingly heavier, making him almost unable to bear it.

He didn’t know how many days they’d traveled before they finally came upon someone.

It was a man in a black robe, digging through spirit fruit grass with a small bag in his hand. Shen Zhixian was about to approach him to ask about the

situation. But, the man saw Shen Zhixian and came forward at his own initiative.

"Your body is weak. It's time to eat something." The man in the black robe looked at Shen Zhixian, his young face very serious. "Otherwise you will disappear."

His gaze fell directly on Shen Zhixian and not once did he mention or acknowledge Yan Jin, who was direct next to Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian felt the same familiar creepy feeling.

His sleepiness was slightly suppressed, and he reluctantly responded, “What does this mean?”

The man fixed his gaze on Shen Zhixian for a long time. Then, he suddenly lowered his head and dug through the small bag in his hand. He pulled out a small, gray fruit and handed it to Shen Zhixian. “It doesn’t mean anything good. Here, I’ll give this to you. Eat it quickly to fill up your body.”

Shen Zhixian didn’t know what the fruit was but it looked very innocent and had a sweet smell.

When he smelled this sweet scent, Shen Zhixian’s thoughts became chaotic. With a blank expression, he subconsciously reached out to take the fruit.

However, in the next instant, Yan Jin grabbed onto his hand and pull him back.

And the fruit fell to the ground.

The man in the black robe couldn’t see Yan Jin. He only saw that Shen Zhixian took a step back at the last minute, causing his fruit to fall to the ground.

His expression shifted, feeling as if his good intentions had been stepped on. This made him a little angry and he said in a cold, stiff voice, “I saw

that you’re not well so I wanted to give you this spiritual qi fruit out of kindness. Since you didn’t appreciate it, don’t regret it later.”

He walked away angrily without picking up the fruit.

Shen Zhixian suddenly regained his senses. He looked down at the fruit and his heart went cold. There was no gray fruit in sight. Only a thick black qi!

The smell floated up and there was faint rotten stench. That sweet smell from before was nowhere to be found.

Shen Zhixian stood there for such a long time that Yan Jin pulled his hand in concern, whispering, “What’s wrong?”

Shen Zhixian felt as if he was on the verge of figuring something out but he became drowsy again, causing his mind to turn in confusion. Unable to think of anything, he shook his head tiredly. “Nothing. I’m just a bit hungry.”

There were weird things here, and they dare not eat indiscriminately. Fortunately, before entering the secret realm, Shen Zhixian had prepared a lot of dry food and water. Since Yan Jin could abstain from eating, it was only Shen Zhixian who had to gnaw through these dry foods.

Shen Zhixian was not a willful person. Under these environmental conditions, even if these dry foods were more difficult to eat, in order to survive, he could swallow them without any resistance. But today, somehow, he wanted to vomit.

"I don't want to eat ..." He put away the dry food that he’d just taken a bite out of, barely drank two sips of water, and refused to eat anymore. He leaned against Yan Jin and looked at the stream not far away.

There was a school of fat and tender fish swimming in the stream. They happily jumped over the clear water. There was a stupid fish who’d jumped too high and ended up falling on the banks.

Shen Zhixian saw this and suddenly remembered the gray robed man’s grilled fish. In that instant, an overwhelming desire to eat grilled fish surged up.

He sat upright and got up with the intention to pick up the fish and cook it.

Yan Jin noticed his action and stopped him immediately. “Sui Xian!”

Shen Zhixian didn’t hear him; he only had grilled fish in his eyes. The more he couldn’t eat grilled fish, the more uncomfortable he became. It tortured him desperately. He even felt that if he continued to sleep like this, sooner or later, he would never wake up.

Only the grilled fish could save him.

He struggled to get out of Yan Jin’s hold. Probably because he was too eager, he moved with a great burst of strength. And, because Yan Jin dared not use too much force for fear of hurting him, he almost couldn’t hold him back.

"Master!" he yelled with a rare nervousness and pulled Shen Zhixian back tightly into his arms.

Shen Zhixian was suddenly yelled at by Yan Jin, causing him to snap out of it. He said with difficulty, “I want to eat that fish…”

Yan Jin listened tensely. He glanced at the shore of black water and the motionless fish--To be precise, it was a black fish skeleton with a rotten, fishy smell.

"It's fake. It's all black... Master! Sui Xian!"

However, Shen Zhixian was already unable to hear him. His eyes became disorganized, his body began to spasm, his hands waved wildly, his finger twitched. Like a drowning man looking for a life-saving driftwood.

He repeatedly mumbled “grilled fish” in a loud voice, and his expression

was extremely painful. The pain seemed to gradually increase until it was almost unbearable. Short groans came from his mouth, and sweat beaded across his forehead.

Yan Jin wrapped his arms around Shen Zhixian’s shoulders, clasping his two hands together behind Shen Zhixian’s back. Unable to appease him, Yan Jin gritted his teeth and, in desperation, lowered his head to press his forehead against Shen Zhixian’s forehead.

Shen Zhixian’s forehead was ice cold. Yan Jin slightly pressed against him to prevent him from moving and then passed spiritual force through the point where their foreheads met, gently soothing Shen Zhixian.

It was surprisingly effective. After a while, Shen Zhixian gradually calmed and the anxiety and discomfort eased. He gasped, his eyes clearing. As soon as he regained his senses, he noticed how close they were and almost jerked back.

They were too close. So close that the tip of their noses were lightly touching. When Yan Jin spoke, Shen Zhixian could feel his warm breath brushing across his lips. The sensation caused Shen Zhixian to instinctively lick his own lips.

Yan Jin’s throat tightened. He saw the confusion in Shen Zhixian’s eyes and, since the transmission of spiritual power was still ongoing, he only said softly, “Sui Xian, close your eyes.”

Shen Zhixian froze. Subconsciously listening to Yan Jin’s words, his eyes drifted shut.

Xixi: This extra post is a happy thank you to my daily readers and commentors. I've greatly enjoyed reading all your comments and thoughts.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 37

When Shen Zhixian closed his eyes, Yan Jin no longer hesitated. As he drew in a faint breath, a layer of scarlet washed over his eyes. He continued to push a steady stream of spiritual power into Shen Zhixian's body, replenishing and easing the veins that hadn’t been nourished by spiritual power in a long time.

Since Shen Zhixian had returned to his senses, he no longer needed to be restrained. Yan Jin slightly loosened his hold and his hands slid down to grasp Shen Zhixian’s palm.

Yan Jin's hands were very warm and snug, giving Shen Zhixuan a sense of security. He also subconsciously held Yan Jin’s hand tightly, like a drowning man who’d finally caught his life-saving driftwood.

Shen Zhixian's body was too weak. Yan Jin feared he would do more harm than good if he transferred too much spiritual power at one time. When Shen Zhixian’s state had almost returned to normal, Yan Jin slowly withdrew his spiritual power. Once done, he pulled his forehead away slightly from Shen Zhixian’s.

They were still so close that the moment Yan Jin’s gaze lowered to look at Shen Zhixian’s face, he could clearly see his lips, which were slightly dry and pale due to this obstacle.

Shen Zhixian was probably exhausted. His eyes remained closed, his eyelashes slightly trembling and his breath coming out in small, slightly heavy pants. Yan Jin studied his face for a moment and finally couldn't help it. He quietly approached, and with great restrained, gently pressed his

mouth to Shen Zhixian’s lips.

It was the lightest touch, like a warm breeze brushing across delicate lips, so fast that it was easy to think it a mere illusion.

Shen Zhixian felt something warm brushed against his lips but, at this moment, his eyes were closed and he was a recovering mess so he didn’t think much of it. Feeling Yan Jin pulling away from him, he opened his eyes tiredly.

He was so exhausted that he could barely sit upright. Yan Jin embraced him, and he rested his head on Yan Jin's shoulder, breathing slowly and easily.

After a while, he regained his senses and finally had the energy to ponder over this weird secret realm.

This secret realm...had never been seen before. What’s more, no one had supposedly gone in before. It was rumored that this was a new secret realm, but….

“When I was speaking to that gray robed man that day, he seemed to have no knowledge of current events in Xin City. He couldn’t be someone who’d recently entered. Even those he was familiar with were not recent newcomers.” Shen Zhixian closed his eyes and pulled away a bit. “Since these people had entered a long time ago, why was there a rumor that this secret realm had never opened before and that this would be the first time...”

“For such a big secret realm, if people had already entered and exited, it would be impossible to hide its movements, unless…” He trailed off, but Yan Jin immediately understood what he meant. At last, Shen Zhixian stated his theory, “Unless those who entered didn’t leave.”

If no one came out, they wouldn’t be able to talk about the existence of this secret realm. The last time this secret realm opened, it was probably very low-key. As a result, few people knew about it and those who did enter never came out. It was no wonder that the outside world was unaware of its

existence.

So why don't these people leave?

Was it that they didn't want to leave, or could it be that they just...couldn’t leave at all?

There was an aching pain in Shen Zhixian’s throat, and he gave a cough. Speaking in a low voice, he murmured, “My spiritual power has been sealed, and so I couldn’t see it. When you look at the people you’d seen these days, what were their state?”

Yan Jin saw that Shen Zhixian was uncomfortable and gave him water until he shook his head to signal him to stop. Then Yan Jin answered, “The realm is low and it’s spiritual qi is actually very weak.”

That was another strange thing.

In principle, except for Shen Zhixian’s case, everyone who can enter the secret realm should have certain high prerequisites in terms of stage and practice. When this place’s spiritual qi had not been totally exhausted, it was understandable that the cultivators would stay. But, once the spirit realm’s spiritual qi weakened, why didn’t they leave?

Shen Zhixian thought of the black robed man and murmured, "Everyone I saw that day couldn't see me ... but this black robed man I saw today could see me and even persuaded me to eat the so-called spirit fruit... "

A creepy conjecture came to mind, and Shen Zhixian felt his palms began to sweat a little.

He paused for a moment, raised his head slightly to look at Yan Jin, and whispered, "I think these people are long gone. They didn't leave, maybe not because they didn’t want to leave as they said, but because they couldn’t leave at all…”

These people should have lived a long time ago. The reason they couldn’t

leave was because their flesh and blood had long turned into bones, and only a weak soul was left. How could they leave?!

Yan Jin took Shen Zhixian’s hand and tightened his arms around him, as if afraid he might disappear. Shen Zhixian felt momentarily strangled, only to realize that he was lying in Yan Jin’s arms in a totally undignified and unattractive way…He moved slightly, wanting to sit upright. However, the weakness and fatigue that seemed soaked in his bones dispelled him.

Shen Zhixian quietly looked at Yan Jin’s expression. When he noticed that Yan Jin was looking at him as if he didn’t care much, he gave a lazy, mental shrug and quietly pressed back against Yan Jin. He continued to ponder out loud. “It was said that most of them were taken with initiative into this secret realm, just like me. They should all be normal, living people when they enter…”

Until the secret realm gradually emptied them of any spiritual powers. Emptied them of anger, flesh and blood, and decayed them into dust. These ghosts were then trapped here, repeating the so-called “secret realm experience” day and night.

"They can't see living people because only the same dead souls can see each other ..." Shen Zhixian felt that he’d faintly touched upon the tail-end of the truth, and he said, "The higher the cultivation, the slower the death. In the eyes of those with low cultivation who'd died early, it would only seem as if some people just take slower to become visible."

This speculation was ridiculously absurd, but it was undeniable that this may be the closest speculation to the truth.

Yan Jin had spiritual power to protect his body, but Shen Zhixian, who has no spiritual power, will naturally be affected. If Yan Jin had not passed him some spiritual power and calmed his mind, he likely would not be able to control his need for the black qi “food” today. If not for Yan Jin, he feared he might have to fold the remaining half of his life here.

"Those black qi..." Shen Zhixian asked slowly, "Was it devil qi?"

Yan Jin was silent for a moment and said in a low voice, "They ... should be devil cultivators."

Shen Zhixian frowned.

This was a little unexpected. The gray robe man used black qi when he killed the deer that day. He thought it was because the man ate too much magical stuff in the secret realm, but it was because ... They were originally devil cultivators?

In recent years, immortal cultivators had devoted themselves to fighting the devil cultivators. As a result, devil cultivators had almost disappeared for a long time. So, why were there so many devil cultivators here? Moreover, how long had they been here? Perhaps, they were from a long time ago, when immortal cultivators and devil cultivators still coexisted peacefully.

Why did the secret realm bring in so many devil cultivators?

No, it couldn’t be right. He was not a devil cultivator and many people in Xin City were not devil cultivators. Yan Jin…The only exception was Yan Jin. Shen Zhixian didn’t know if it was due to instinct or if he was too affected by the original book, but he’d always felt a sense of inevitability when he thought of Yan Jin becoming a devil cultivator...

Leaving aside Yan Jin for the time being, why bring so many cultivators in? Did it want to trap them all in a secret place and turn them into fertilizers for these flowers?

Unable to think of a reason, Shen Zhixian murmured to himself for a moment and finally said, “It hasn’t been too long and the people who came in earlier should still be okay. I just don’t know where they are… Let’s go find Duan Yuan and see what’s happening on her end.”

After hearing Shen Zhixuan mention Duan Yan, Yan Jin's eyes flashed, so fleeting that it was gone within a second. His gaze grew calm once again and he asked in a low voice, “Are you still uncomfortable?”

“I’m okay.” After this brainstorming session ended, Shen Zhixian yawned tiredly. He closed his eyes, drowsy and lethargic. “Take care of me. Don’t let me touch those things…”

As he said this, his voice gradually trailed off. His light breathing puffed against Yan Jin’s neck, slightly moist, slightly warm, rubbing Yan’s Jin heart into a pool of water.

He quietly embraced Shen Zhixian like this. After a long time, he looked down slightly, watching Shen Zhixian’s pale face. His eyes were clear and his gaze calm. But, it was unclear what he was thinking at this moment.

After falling asleep, Shen Zhixian’s hand slightly loosened against his own. Yan Jin noticed it. He slightly released their clasped hands, and then he slowly and firmly squeezed his fingers between Shen Zhixian’s fingers.

Ten fingers tightly interlocked, as Shen Zhixian had done before.

Inseparable.

…..

Shen Zhixuan said it should be fairly easy to leave, but, in fact, they wandered for several days and still couldn't leave these dark areas.

Shen Zhixuan was increasingly unable to resist the influence and erosion of the magical energy. Yan Jin originally only needed to spend one to two days transferring spiritual powers to him, and then he eventually had to do so every few hours.

Even so, Shen Zhixian could hardly resist the tiredness that had percolated from his bones. In the end, he became so groggy he couldn't even walk. Yan Jin carried him on his back without a word.

Shen Zhixian clung desperately to his last sober awareness, wrapping his arms around Yan Jin's neck, hands sometimes dangling in front of Yan Jin’s

chest when he was too tired to hold on, and always leaning his head against Yan Jin's wide shoulder.

The fog grew denser and quieter. Until, unexpectedly, a faint melodious singing drifted to them as if from a great distance.

"A’jin ..."

Yan Jin was carefully identifying the road they’re traversing, walking fast. Then, he heard Shen Zhixian’s sudden whisper in his ear, "Did you hear...singing ..."

Singing?

Yan Jin slowed down a little, listening attentively, and sure enough, a faint song came from a distance.

As the awareness in Shen Zhixian's gaze slowly dissipated and his spiritual soul continuously weakened, he leaned against Yan Jin's back in a muddled daze. He began subconsciously humming along: "..."

The singing was difficult to imitate or decipher. It was in a mysterious, ancient language, with each note wrapped in leisurely charms. Shen Zhixian didn’t understand the words, but he was good at imitating them. After humming along in a low voice, he actually learned seven or eight points.

His voice was not as clear as that of the distant song, and it needed to be softer and gentler. But, when he murmured with a weak ending, like a small hook, he suddenly hooked out some of Yan Jin's deep memories in his heart.

Emotions surged, causing Yan Jin's eyes to deepen. He accelerated his pace and continued to move forward.

As they went down the road faster and faster, the fog became more and more dense, and the road ahead couldn’t be seen at all. In the fog came many sounds that began to echo one another, drowning out the singing.

There was the voice of the man in the gray robe that Shen Zhixian had met at the beginning, the voice of the man in the black robe who gave him the fruit a few days ago, and other more unfamiliar voices, repeatedly echoing one another.

"Why are you leaving..?."

"It’s so good here..."

"There’s a lot of treasures. Let’s stay together..."

"Stay... Stay with us..."

"With us..."

The cacophony of voices were too intrusive. Hearing these distant echoing voices, Shen Zhixian drew in a breath and began to feel restless.

He moved with great discomfort on Yan Jin's back. Yan Jin felt it and tightened his grasp on Shen Zhixian, not daring to let go. He shouted "Sui Xian", wanting him to wake up, but Shen Zhixian continued to struggle as if unable to hear him, saying he wanted to go into the fog, wanted to stay with “these people.”

Shen Zhixian continued to struggle weakly, and suddenly a slightly stiff, rusty male voice rang out, right in his ear, learning the distant song stiffly and humming softly.

Shen Zhixian gradually stopped struggling, falling into a listless daze. As he listened to Yan Jin’s song, he somehow calmed down and grew quiet.

Yan Jin’s face froze with hard concentration, thinking hard of those tones, those weird characters, stumbling and humming, as he walked quickly through the dense fog.

His voice, to Shen Zhixian, was full of soothing power, like an invisible barrier that isolated Shen Zhixian from the evil spirits of the outside world.

Shen Zhixian was muddleheaded, his body suddenly alternating between extreme cold and extreme heat. It made him feel both pained and distressed. He stared blankly for a long while, until, at once, he began to feel very aggrieved. He subconsciously tightened his arms around Yan Jin's neck and grumbled injustices in his ears, "A'jin… Can't bear it… I can't bear it..."

The Shen Zhixian that Yan Jin had seen in the past had always been calm, gentle, free, and easygoing. He'd never seen Shen Zhixian's grievous attitude. Even when he was suffering from heart attacks in Qingyun Sect, Shen Zhixian had not been so aggrieved.

His mind felt as if a fireball had ignited inside, making his body burn hot.

Unable to seduce them with sounds, many figures gradually walked out from the thick fog. They were all black skeletons, coated with a rotten stench. They surrounded Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin, repeatedly requesting that they stay behind with them.

Yan Jin held Shen Zhixian tightly with one hand, and with his other hand, he pulled out his sword. His eyes was a dense, malicious red and his expression was ice-cold as he killed without hesitation.

His fierce sword rays shattered skulls and black bones. Pained screams echoed around them and the dense fog retreated frantically, exposing a fog-like barrier in front of them—they finally found the edge of this strange land.

Within the depths of Yan Jin's spiritual sea, the restraint that already had cracks in it began to widen, revealing redness underneath. Strands of black qi wandered into his spiritual sea more and more joyfully. Meanwhile, Yan Jin drew in a breath and used all of his strength as he brought down the sword.

There was a loud noise, and the misty barrier cracked, finally revealing the appearance of another boundary.

With beautiful mountains and rivers, and flowers and birds.

Shen Zhixian didn’t say anything, only repeatedly murmuring Yan Jin's name.

Yan Jin carried him on his back and strode out of the place that had trapped them for many days. He glanced slightly around them for signs of danger, and when he found none, he immediately moved Shen Zhixian from his back and into his arms. He held him tightly, with great strengths, as if wanting to press him deep into his bones.

“I’m…” His voice was shaking as he whispered the words into Shen Zhixian’s ear, his mouth mere inches away from the shell-like curve. Every time Shen Zhixian called his name, he would say, “Sui Xian… I’m here.”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 38.1

Yan Jin pressed his cheek tightly against Shen Zhixian, warming his slightly cool cheek.

On Shen Zhixian's pale face were faint traces of black qi. Yan Jin wrapped one arm around his waist and used his other hand to clasp behind his head. His warm lips pressed against Shen Zhixian’s forehead, transferring spiritual power to him and sucking in the black qi. He whispered soothingly, "It's okay. We’re out ..."

Clean and docile spiritual power circulated throughout Shen Zhixian’s body, making him feel like he was soaking lethargically in a warm hot spring. He opened his eyes with great difficulties and his gaze gradually focused…

By the time he’d managed to open his eyes completely, Yan Jin had recovered his usual calm and looked at him with only a slight anxiety.

The distance between them was too close. Shen Zhixian moved back subconsciously, only to find that their poses were... very intimate.

Yan Jin was half a head taller than him. When he was turned around and hugged, he probably felt that wrapping his arms around Yan Jin’s neck was too tiresome so he ended up and tightly holding Yan Jin’s waist instead. Like a koala.

Shen Zhixian quickly retracted his hand and tilted his head back with some embarrassment. He’d wondered why Yan Jin held him so tightly. It turned out that he was holding others by himself.

His face grew hot, and he was so pale that the blush turned his face a little red. Yan Jin’s hand was still tightly clasped around his waist, and Shen Zhixian whispered, "You can let me go now."

Yan Jin carefully looked at him for a moment, and after confirming that he was indeed much better, slowly let go .

As soon as he let go, Shen Zhixian felt heavy, and his legs buckled underneath him. He almost fell down but Yan Jin caught him, firmly supporting him once again.

The previous events had already left him in a very weak state. It was only because Yan Jin was holding his waist and bearing most of his weight, that he was able to stand relaxed. But, the moment Yan Jin let go, he could no longer stand.

Yan Jin wouldn't tolerate his rejection this time, and once again steadily clasped his waist and helped him stand firmly.

This master of his, despite being so weak and feeble, was still so dignified.

Shen Zhixian pursed his lips, wanting to say something to divert his attention, but when he tilted his head, something caught his eyes.

He looked at it and realized that a small thing the size of a finger was lying unobtrusively not far away, shining brightly under the sun.

It seemed to have a kind of mysterious power, which prompted him to pick it up. He immediately realized it was a small and exquisite white jade-like fishbone.

There was no head. Only a long and slender fish body. Each bone was like finely-crafted works of art, with no broken bumps to be seen. The tail was still warm from the sun and the texture of the bones were more like jade than bones.

Shen Zhixian turned it over and studied it.

These past few days, in that place full of black qi, most of the so-called creatures he'd seen were only made up of skulls with a body of condensed black qi. It seemed rather special for a fishbone to suddenly appear here.

Shen Zhixian instinctively felt that it must be very important. He rubbed the small fan-shaped tail bone for a while and then carefully put it away.

As they began to look around carefully, they realized that their surroundings were green and lush, with no signs of black qi in sight. Even the air was fresher.

It looked incredibly ordinary, with rock mountains, trees and flowers. Not far away, a stream babbled merrily—In fact, everything seemed like the previous area, but unlike the previous, it was untainted by black qi and it looked more peaceful and calm.

They were obviously still inside the secret realm.

"Let's go and look for Duan Yuan." Shen Zhixian sighed and added, "This place is weird. She might not know that we're trapped here and can't leave."

Yan Jin said nothing. He only slightly bowed his head as he asked, "Sui Xian, can you move by yourself? Shall I carry you on my back? Or, I can hold you. "

Shen Zhixian nearly choked on his own saliva. When he was too groggy to walk by himself, Yan Jin had also asked him. But, at that time, Shen Zhixian was barely conscious. Now, he was wide awake. As he listened to this question…

Why did he feel a little embarrassed?

The suddenly bashful Shen Zhixian shook his head slightly and refused the temptation of laziness. He said, "No need."

He’d already gained some strengths. Moving back a little uncomfortably, he added, “Hand…”

Shen Zhixian motioned for Yan Jin to release his waist.

Yan Jin didn’t resist. He obediently loosened his hold on Shen Zhixian’s waist and then… promptly held his hand instead.

The way he held Shen Zhixian’s hand was very ordinary. After all, Shen Zhixian was awake and Yan Jin didn’t dare do much. But, even so, Shen Zhixian was uneasy and tried to pull his hand away.

“We’re just holding hands. What are you worried about, Sui Xian?” Yan Jin calmly said, once he noticed Shen Zhixian shrinking away. He paused and seemed a little puzzled, “Or, does Sui Xian want to change how we hold hands?”

His fingertips pointedly jabbed between Shen Zhixian’s fingers.

These words seemed to be familiar, and he seemed to have said it to Yan Jin.

He also knew what the other method was.

Shen Zhixuan looked down at their clasped hand. He endured, not refusing. Okay...Okay, he’ll treat it as if Yan Jin was just worried he might fall.

He wondered if he was just imagining it. It felt as if something had changed in Yan Jin. He just couldn’t pinpoint exactly what it was.

It felt rather strange.

Speaking of which, when he’d been lethargic earlier, it seemed like ... he heard Yan Jin singing.

He still had some vague memories, remembering that when they were in

that place, they'd heard a distant song… Yan Jin didn't really sing, though. He'd just hummed the small tune. Although it was rusty and stiff, it was indescribable, making Shen Zhixian felt extremely moved.

Yan Jin had taken care of him like this… How can Shen Zhixian completely wash himself white again?

As Shen Zhixian thought wildly, he followed Yan Jin step by step.

He'd been deeply affected by the dark qi. At this moment, he walked like a toddler, slow and awkward and needing frequent breaks. Fortunately, Yan Jin was patient and took very good care of him.

.....

After walking for two to three days with frequent rests, Shen Zhixian slowly began to feel normal.

There were a lot of good things here. While walking on the road, he could see spirit grass and, from time to time, a few spirit fruits. Shen Zhixian looked at a few good ones and asked Yan Jin to collect them all.

As Shen Zhixian shook off the mud on the spirit grass, he suddenly remembered the long-disappeared Xiao Caoya and casually asked after him.

"Sleeping, " Yan Jin responded.

Within two days after abandoning Shen Zhixian for Yan Jin, Xiao Caoya had entered Yan Jin's storage bag and fallen into a deep sleep.

Shen Zhixian humped, his expression quite pensive

In the dirt pit left by the grass, they noticed a section of spirit jade. Yan Jin dug it out. The spirit jade was as large as his palm, and even the mud that coated it could hide it's rich aura.

As Yan Jin was digging, Shen Zhixian looked around casually, as if

searching for something. Eventually, Yan Jin straightened and turned to look at him for a long time. Even then, Shen Zhixian was still looking.

Yan Jin asked quietly, “Did Sui Xian enter the secret realm to look for something?”

Shen Zhixian collected his thoughts, hesitated for a while, and finally mentioned the inverted demon fish scale.

After a moment of silence, Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows. “Forget it….This place is too weird. Let’s just find Duan Yuan.”

Although he said this, his face was obviously not very eager to give up.

Yan Jin was silent for a while and asked, “Is it related to Master’s heart ailment?”

Shen Zhixian sighed, which can be considered as a positive answer in itself.

When Yan Jin didn’t respond, Shen Zhixian called for them to proceed. Yan Jin suddenly said, “Wait until we find Young Lady Duan. Sui Xian can leave with her, and I’ll stay behind to find the scale.”

Before Shen Zhixian could respond, he head Yan Jin continued, “Sui Xian will then truly have his wishes fulfilled, including having Young Lady Duan.”

Shen Zhixian came to an abrupt halt, surprised. What thing?…What wish? And what does it have to do with Duan Yuan?

Before he’d managed to react, they were scents Xuanji Tower disciple that had calculated a divinatory diagram for him in Xin City saw them. Shen Zhixian opened his mouth to speak but a loud greeting suddenly came from nearby. “Oh! It’s two you again!

The two people looked toward the voice and were silent for a moment...In the end, it was the other person with the divinatory tube who came running,

huffing and puffing.

So, he also entered the secret realm.

Seeing people he knew, even if it was one-sided, the middle-aged man was still very happy to exchange genial greetings with them.

Since they didn’t know this person well, Shen Zhixian didn’t tell him about the weird things they’d experienced. He only asked the other about his situation. After speaking a few words, Shen Zhixian noticed that the other party didn’t seem to notice anything weird. Then, he asked, “Do you still remember the young woman who was with us that day? Did you see her?”

“Ah?” Duan Yuan’s temperament was good so the middle-aged man still had a bit of an impression. He pondered for a moment and said with uncertainty, “I haven’t seen the young woman but I saw someone a few days ago...who looks a lot like her. It was a young man.”

Uh???

After a pause, he added, “Quite handsome...He looked like the young lady you mentioned...About ninety percent alike but no chin scar. He also looked older. Maybe they’re siblings?”

Shen Zhixian hesitated. “I don’t know…”

Duan Yuan had never told them whether he had brothers or sisters so Shen Zhixian wasn’t too certain.

As the middle-aged man was about to say something, he suddenly glimpsed the spirit that Yan Jin was holding. His eyes brightened, and he immediately became too excited to remember those other things. “Yaoshan Jade!”

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This was the spirit jade he’d been looking for!!!

He’d been wanting to refine his bamboo sticks for a long time, and yaoshan jade was the ideal material. Unfortunately, the material was too precious, too scarce, and too rare. Even after searching for several years, he still hadn’t found it. At present, Yan Jin held such a large piece, enough for him to finish refining a set of bamboo sticks!

He stared anxiously at Shen Zhixian, "Where did you find this?"

Shen Zhixian leaned slightly and pointed in the direction they came from. "There. But, there’s probably no more.”

He also naturally knew that yaoshan jade was a very rare spirit jade, and they were quite lucky to have found this piece of jade in this secret realm.

The middle-aged man looked with disappointment in the direction he was pointing at. "That way ..."

He hesitated, unwilling to give up. He clenched his teeth and pulled out two spirit fruits from his storage bag. Feeling a little embarrassed, he said, "I’d been wanting to use yaoshan jade to refine weapons for a long time, but I had a difficult time trying to find it. These two spiritual fruits are not bad. I wonder if I can ask these two honorable sirs to part with your cherished item and trade with me…?”

Shen Zhixian glanced at the two fruits in his hand, which were also very precious. Of course, they weren’t as rare as yaoshan jade. However, he also

had no use for the jade. Wouldn’t it be better for him to cultivate good karma with people in the Jianghu?

He glanced at Yan Jin and saw that the other party also had no intention of refusing, so he completed the exchange with the middle-aged man.

The Xuanji Tower disciple trembled with joy, turning over and looking at the spirit jade with great joy. He found that the quality was better than he’d imagined. He exchanged the two spirit fruits, both of which were Shen Zhixian's loss.

But, since he’d handed over a mere two fruits, he thought about it, thanked them with great courtesy, and promised, “I, Xuanji Tower’s 13th disciple named Su Cheng, owe you two honorable sirs.”

He proudly puffed up his chest. "In my sect, I can be considered as someone reputable with top level skills. If you both have any need, I will certainly help to the best of my ability.”

Shen Zhixian smiled modestly at having gained this kind of favor. Su Cheng looked like an open and honest person. Not allowing him to repay this favor would probably make him feel guilty and distressed, which might prove harmful to his spiritual development.

Su Cheng, who also wanted to double-check the area they’d found the jade, thanked them and left. As he was leaving, he thought of something and hurriedly turned back to say, “The divination hexagram that I recently calculated for you is true. Don’t give up. You’ll be pleasantly surprised during this trip!”

"Thank you for your good words." Shen Zhixian smiled and watched him hurried away. He withdrew his gaze, not taking the sentence to heart. The biggest protagonist was standing beside him. Believing in Yan Jin was better than believing in a hexagram.

Due to the disruption, Shen Zhixian also forgot about Yan Jin's previous question about Duan Yuan, and Yan Jin also did not mention it again. The

two walked along with each other and intermittently saw several people.

They were familiar with these people, most of whom they'd seen hanging around Xin City. One of people had even stayed in the same inn as them.

Shen Zhixian used this opportunity to inquire about news of Duan Yuan. Some people shook their heads, and some people had seen him, but...why was it a young man again?!!

Shen Zhixian frowned, and then asked another individual. This time, he got more accurate news.

"The young lady you mentioned, I haven't seen her. But I just saw a young man who looks like what you'd described, just over there." The monk pointed them in a direction. "He was still there two minutes ago. You can check it out. "

Shen Zhixian thanked the monk, who said "you're welcome" with a smile and left.

They walked in the direction of the monk's finger and sure enough, they eventually came across a young man dressed in blue, squatting on the side of the road and digging and digging with great enthusiasm. Next to him was a small pile of dirt.

This back view looked really similar to Duan Yuan...

Shen Zhixian hesitated for a while, then heard the man in blue gave a joyful "Ha!" as he pulled out a spirit grass with long roots.

There were many slick red fruits on the root of the spirit grass. The young man in blue seemed to be afraid of shaking the fruit. While carefully holding on to the spirit grass, he turned around, and his countenance fell into Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin's line of sight.

At that moment, Shen Zhixian realized what Su Cheng meant by "very similar"— It was too similar!

It was just that he’d changed into man's attire and there were no chin scar. The whole face looked a little younger overall. Looking at the facial features, he looked 90% like Duan Yuan!

As Shen Zhixian was still thinking, “This couldn’t be Duan Yuan’s brother, could it?”, the young man turned around and saw them. His eyes lit up, and he quickly ran over. “Big Brother Sui! Big Brother Yan!”

The sound of his voice was very clear. Even though it was also similar to Duan Yuan’s voice, Shen Zhixian didn't want to assume.

Shen Zhixian blinked awkwardly and asked cautiously, "You are...?"

Duan Yuan realized that he was looking at her strangely and stiffened. Her voice weakened. "Big Brother Sui, I am....Duan Yuan. "

Shen Zhixian breathed a sigh of relief, and smiled. “I thought I saw your brother.”

Duan Yuan quietly looked at him and said, "I thought that...here, wearing men's clothing would be more convenient… "

"Oh. It is. You look good in these clothes." Shen Zhixian nodded in understanding. Since Duan Yuan was separated from them, she was alone, and as she thought, it was indeed more convenient to pretend to be a man.

Hearing him praise her, Duan Yuan felt a little shy and said hesitantly, "Actually, I ..."

She trailed off into a long pause. Shen Zhixian's eyes suddenly focused on the spirit grass root in her hand. "What's that?"

"Ah?" Duan Yuan was interrupted, and the little courage she’d mustered up dissipated immediately. She looked down at what Shen Zhixian was pointing at, thinking he was asking about the little fruits, but Shen Zhixuan was pointing at a small piece of gray something hanging on the root.

Duan Yuan carefully hooked out the thing, only to find that it turned out to be a small... fish skull?

She handed the fish skull to Shen Zhixian, wondering out loud, "Spirit grass in this soil can still grow fishbones?"

Shen Zhixian didn't say anything. He carefully looked at the fish skull and wiped off the little bit of dirt that still clung to it. The appearance, the color, the texture, the fracture...

Shen Zhixian realized that it looked more and more familiar, and suddenly, realization flashed. He took out the fishbone skeleton that he'd picked up earlier, put the two pieces together and they melded together into a single unit—He was right!

When he raised his eyes to look at Yan Jin, there was a touch of contemplation in his eyes.

Duan Yuan didn't understand so Shen Zhixuan held the complete fish skeleton in his hands and explained what had happened to him and Yan Jin. As Duan Yuan listened to his story, she looked increasingly more frightened.

Shen Zhixian said, "This place is very strange. Have you noticed anything wrong?"

Duan Yuan carefully pondered all the things that she'd seen during these past few days, and said, "No. The only major oddity here is there are very few monsters. I've only occasionally seen one or two, and they weren't cruel. This secret realm was very friendly to us."

She hesitated for a moment, and asked, "Do you want to leave? But this secret realm might not open again for a long time and we don't know what's here… Maybe we should take a few days and look around? If we discover anything wrong, we can still get out in time."

Yan Jin had said that he would stay to find the scale for Shen Zhixian, and Duan Yuan also said that she wanted to stay and take a look. Alright, both protagonists had said so. He was just a small cannon fodder supporting role. It was still better to follow the big and small protagonists.

In the end, Shen Zhixian also didn’t want to give up on this secret realm, since it seemed more likely that the scale would be here. He nodded.

This secret realm was indeed what Duan Yuan said. The biggest abnormality was that there were too many good things and too few dangers.

The three traveled together for a few days. They found a lot of spirit grass, spirit fruits, and spirit jades, and they also had to drive away several monsters. But, there were no big dangers.

In his spare time, Shen Zhixian often rubbed the fish bones as he pondered. After pondering and pondering, he suddenly found that some fine cracks had unexpectedly appeared on the originally smooth and round bone surface.

It seemed to be cracking.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes narrowed slightly. Noticing that there was a pond just a short distance away, he pulled Yan Jin's sleeve. "Let’s go and get some water there."

Duan Yuan was obsessed with digging pits to look for spiritual fruits. Feeling cheerful, she looked up when she heard Shen Zhixian’s words. Her gaze swung over to the pond nearby and she lowered her head again. As she continued to dig, she said, "You go. I'll wait for you here."

Shen Zhixian said "en", thinking that it was just a few steps anyway.

The two walked to the pond, and Shen Zhixian pulled the fishbone skeleton out again to take a look. The cracks were becoming more and more obvious.

He took a leaf and tried to provide two drops of water onto the fishbone. The fishbone seemed to be conscious and immediately absorbed the drops of water. But the cracks remained visible to the naked eye.

Still useful?

Shen Zhixian raised an eyebrow. This time he simply pinched the tail of the fish and immersed the upper half of the fishbone skeleton in the water. He was not afraid that the fish head would fall off. In fact, the day when the fish head and the fish body spliced together, they were completely stuck together. There weren't even any broken marks, as if they'd always been in one piece.

After merging the upper half in water, he immediately tried to pull it back out. But something unexpected happened. The fishbone suddenly became very hot, so hot that Shen Zhixian couldn't hold on to it and dropped it into the water by accident.

Within a split second, the pond's clear and magnificent bottom rose up and, with it, came the sound of crashing waves. A strong gale swept over, tossing the pond's originally calm surface into turbulence. The water surged, quickly turning into large, rolling waves.

A very high and violent wave surged up from the pond and rushed over them.

Yan Jin responded very quickly and immediately took Shen Zhixian into his arms to protect him, using spiritual forces to set up a barrier to block the tide.

There was a bang, followed by deep silence. Shen Zhixian quietly poked his head out of Yan Jin's arms and looked around, finding that they seemed to have been instantly transported into an underwater realm.

There were corals, swimming fishes, large shells, seaweeds, turtles, and small shrimps.

A small crab found them, quietly crawled over to take a closer look at them, then poked Yan Jin's barrier with his small claws. The crab was immediately bounced back by the barrier, causing it to turn over on its back. Eight legs kicked and struggled for a long time before it managed to successfully flip over.

Then it fluttered its small eyes angrily, glared at them, and quickly crawled away.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin looked at each other, their eyes displaying a strange look.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 39

The small pond suddenly became a deep ocean.

Yan Jin's barrier held back the sea water, allowing them to easily look around. There were everything around, large and small schools of fish, and gorgeous coral groups. Shen Zhixian absentmindedly and indistinctly thought that he'd somehow entered an aquarium.

There was a path on the bottom of the sea, meandering into the distance. They walked forward cautiously, and after half an hour, the path disappeared on thin sand.

This was...the shore?

Stepping on the soft and fine sand, Shen Zhixian couldn't help turning back to look at the sea. The pale blue sea was quiet and sparkling under the sun. No one could see that there was such a path at the bottom of the sea.

"I found you!" A slightly childish shout came out of nowhere. Shen Zhixian immediately pulled back his concentration. In the next moment, his eyes widened and, without hesitation, he ducked back behind Yan Jin—This scene, he seemed to have encountered it before.

A seven- or eight-year-old boy quickened his feet and rushed forward. But as he was just about to pull on Yan Jin's clothes, he froze when he noticed Yan Jin's cold eyes.

"Found, found..." The boy's voice became smaller and smaller. He tilted his head and looked at Yan Jin carefully. The more he looked, the more

confused he became. A faint disappointment appeared in his eyes. "Ah, not Little Nine."

Shen Zhixian leaned out from behind Yan Jin and looked at the little guy. The little boy hesitated and asked, "Have you seen Little Nine?"

At the same time, Shen Zhixian also hesitantly asked, "Where is this?"

Three people looked at each other. Looking at me, looking at you, no one could answer anyone.

After a while, the little boy asked timidly, "So, then ... have you seen Little Eight, Little Seven, Little Six..."

He counted it in a string, from nine to one, and as Shen Zhixian listened, his head spun in circles. Who broke this kid’s brain?

The little boy was still staring at him. Because he felt Yan Jin's indifference and standoffishness, he subconsciously ignored him and asked Shen Zhixian instead.

However, Shen Zhixuan retreated behind Yan Jin again. The little boy took a careful peek at Yan Jin, and then he carefully moved two steps sideways until he stood in front of Shen Zhixian again, staring intently.

Shen Zhixian was helpless. He had a headache the moment he saw the child, and he subconsciously clutched Yan Jin's sleeve as he asked, "These people you asked about, are they all children?"

The little boy nodded happily when he saw him answer. "Uh-huh! My name is Little Ten, and I'm going to find Little Nine, Little Eight, Little Seven….All of them!”

Shen Zhixian thought for a while and tried harder to question him. "But we just got here. We don't know what this place is yet. Can you tell us where this is? If you tell us, we'll find your friends for you. "

He thought he’d spoken very gently and kindly, but Little Ten stared at him for a while. Then, he opened his small mouth and mechanically repeated. "Did you see Little Nine, Little Eight, Little Seven, Little Six… Where are they?" He mumbled, "We’re playing hide and seek, but I can't find them."

Little Ten’s expression gradually became confused, as if he’d encountered a big problem. He frowned, murmured for a while, and just like when he came, he spread his feet and ran away.

Shen Zhixian quietly breathed a sigh of relief. He saw some houses not far away and said, "Let’s go there and see if there’s an adult."

"Mnn." The sand was dense so Shen Zhixian carefully walked with one step at a time. Yan Jin took Shen Zhixian’s hand and walked forward steadily. He casually asked, "Sui Xian, do you dislike children?"

"I don’t dislike them. Children are still very cute. I’m just afraid they will cling to me and cry." Shen Zhixian sighed, "When they cry, I’ll have a headache, and I can't coax them."

"Sui Xian, have you taken care of children before?"

"No," Shen Zhixian answered firmly, "I try my best to avoid them. How can I take the initiative to take care of them?”

Yan Jin stopped talking, but Shen Zhixian didn't pay him any mind. As they approached the house, Yan Jin suddenly stopped and asked, "What if ... the child doesn't cry. Would you like it?"

Shen Zhixian thought they were already done with the topic, so he was surprised that Yan Jin would suddenly ask such a sentence. After he recovered from his surprise, he said, "If the child doesn’t cry or make trouble ... it's okay. Who doesn't like a good boy?"

Who doesn't like it?

As Yan Jin lowered his eyes, an unknown emotion flashed through them.

But, he didn’t ask any more questions.

There were many houses stationed in a row by the sea. In total, it seemed to be about twelve families. They knocked on the doors one by one, but there was no response from inside.

Yan Jin listened carefully for a moment, then finally opened the door decisively, only to find that the room was empty and there was no human figure in sight.

They opened four to five more houses, all of which were empty. There was furniture and other things, all covered with a layer of dirt. Obviously, no one had used them in a long time.

This place ... Shen Zhixian had an ominous feeling in his heart. If this place was like this, then could it be that the child they’d met earlier was the only one left?

Oh, maybe there were Little Nine, Little Eight...A group of children left.

But where had the adults all gone?

They resignedly opened the door of another house. But, as soon as the door was opened, a movement immediately caught their eyes. Pleased, Shen Zhixian looked over with Yan Jin, only to be crushed at once when he discovered a childish face.

"Little Ten?" Shen Zhixian blurted out, looking at the face he’d just seen earlier. After he called out, he realized he was mistaken. The direction in which Little Ten had ran away was not in this direction. How could he turn back and sneak into this house without Yan Jin noticing him?

The child hiding under the table saw them, shyly scooted out a little, and whispered, "Have you seen Little Ten, Little Eight, Little Seven..."

Shen Zhixian helplessly rubbed his forehead. This kid with a face similar to that of Ten, could it be Nine?

It was indeed human nature to repeat and the world’s nature to copy!

Before Shen Zhixian could respond, Yan Jin’s grip on his hand tightened, then he whispered into Shen Zhixian’s ear, “He’s not a living person. He’s just a spirit.”

Surprised, Shen Zhixian turned to look at him.

Yan Jin motioned for him to look back at the little boy.

The little boy was still crouched under the table. Seeing that there was no response from them, his eyes became empty and gradually grew red. Big, teardrops rolled like beads down his cheeks, and he whispered to the ground. “I can’t find them. I can’t find them… I’m so useless. I can’t even play hide and seek…”

As his tears fell more fiercely, his body gradually blurred and the whole person began to look weak and empty. Even Shen Zhixian, who had no spiritual power, also noticed that something was wrong.

Shen Zhixian pointed at the little boy, and then pointed out the door: "Then, that one earlier...is also?"

Yan Jin clarified, "They’re all the same soul.”

Shen Zhixian, "..."

Ten children, Little Ten, Little Nine, Little Eight… All the way to Little One.

This situation made Shen Zhixian couldn’t help but think more. All people have three immortal souls and seven mortal bodies. These ten children were actually just one child whose three souls and seven bodies were broken into disorder!

Who would be so cruel as to break the soul of a child like this?!!

Was it the person who created this secret realm?

Many thoughts flashed through Shen Zhixian's mind. Little Nine’s cries gradually weakened. He looked at the two of them for a while, then suddenly crawled out from underneath the table and, when Shen Zhixian didn't notice, he rushed over.

Shen Zhixian saw him too late and quickly hid behind Yan Jin, but the child still managed to grab a handful of his sleeve.

Little Nine pulled his sleeves tightly and insisted, "Play hide and seek with us! Come and have fun with us so that Yuyu will laugh!"

Before, Shen Zhixian had a headache. But now, he was attracted by a new name: "Yuyu? Who is this?"

Little Nine’s eyes were empty and he turned a deaf ear to Shen Zhixian’s words. He repeatedly said, “Come and hide with us, hide and seek, hide and seek ... "

The repetitive chanting and crying noises made Shen Zhixian’s head spun. He hesitantly looked at Yan Jin.

Shen Zhixian’s silent cry for help was too obvious. Yan Jin thought it over and said coldly, "Be quiet."

Whether it was because he was too cold or for some other reason, Little Nine was frightened and looked like he wanted to cry but dare not cry.

Although he didn’t dare cry, his words kept repeating, "Hide and seek hide and seek hide and seek hide and seek ..."

Yan Jin said a few more cold words to him but Little Nine ignored him. He seemed to only think of himself, as if immersed in his own world.

Shen Zhixian had no choice but to ask in a low voice, "How do we play

hide and seek?"

Maybe because the child was only one tenth of a person, but no matter how many times Yan Jin asked, he couldn't get a response. But, as soon as Shen Zhixian asked this question, Little Nine stopped repeating his chant and turned his eyes over to look at him. “You want to play? You and I hide. Let him find us…”

Shen Zhixian told Yan Jin, “Maybe we need to play hide and seek to find the exit?”

Yan Jin’s eyebrows furrowed. “Too dangerous.”

"There are no living people in the vicinity, only these children can communicate ... They’re just a few split souls. Maybe we can find out the situation if we help unite the souls.”

This was an unknown territory with unknown dangers. Of course, Shen Zhixian didn’t want to be separated from Yan Jin, but there was no alternative. At this moment, the only way might be to follow the child's words.

Even as Shen Zhixian was whispering to Yan Jin and trying to persuade him, Little Nine continued his chant. Yan Jin’s mouth tightened, and his brows drew down even more. Finally, he reluctantly agreed. “Then, let’s try it.”

Little Nine finally got his wish. When Shen Zhixian was about to run away and hide, Yan Jin suddenly reached out and took Shen Zhixian's wrist.

Shen Zhixian was pulled back.

Yan Jin's eyes were very deep and he looked extremely serious, as he enunciated each word very clearly, saying, "I will find you."

"I will."

From the moment Little Nine pulled Shen Zhixian away, heading east, then west into the forest, he kept repeating Yan Jin’s words in his mind.

Find...find him!

Why had he said it like that… Shen Zhixian could hardly describe the feeling. Why did he have to say it...as if Shen Zhixian was a disloyal person who would sneak away, requiring retrieval?!

Shen Zhixian hid behind a tree and looked down at Little Nine, who said, “You hide here. I’ll go over there…”

“Okay, okay.” He nodded perfunctorily, watching as Little Nine took one step and three turns away. When he turned away, Shen Zhixian calmed down enough to carefully sense the spiritual force that Yan Jin had hurriedly given him in parting.

He didn't understand Yan Jin's meaning and assumed that he’d left behind this strand of spiritual power to ensure his safety. At this time, he felt the spiritual power and guided it slowly in his body, thinking about what to do now.

He didn’t know what the strand of spiritual power touched, but suddenly, there came a little heat from within the depths of his spiritual sea, burning Shen Zhixian back to his senses.

Ah?

What was that?

He felt the vague warm feeling again—Was that the contract he’d made with Yan Jin?

The warm sensation was faintly discernible. Shen Zhixuan paid close attention to that delicate sensation, but he could no longer feel it anymore. He thought about it and deliberately guided that strand of spirit power to poke at the contract.

It was effective. Shen Zhixian vaguely felt the contract started to get hot. He closed his eyes and carefully sensed it, turned to a certain direction, and suddenly opened his eyes.

—Yan Jin.

The contract was vaguely telling him that Yan Jin was in that direction.

So was Yan Jin able to sense his position like this before? This contract could be used in this way?

Shen Zhixian hesitated for a moment and looked in Yan Jin's direction, wondering whether he should take the initiative to find him.

Little Nine had taken him east and west into the forest. Because the forest was foggy, he could not see far. He was turned around a few times so he couldn't recall the direction. But, if the contract's compass was correct…

He thought for a moment, and decided to give it a try. This ghostly place, the earlier it is reconciled, the better.

Having made a decision, Shen Zhixian moved forward.

The woods in the forest were lush and green, but not tall. The trees had pale pink flowers that looked a little bit like peach blossoms, emitting a faint scent that hid and drifted silently in the fog.

As Shen Zhixian walked, he instinctively felt that the scent was wrong. But, he'd already come this far. All four directions were obscured by the thick fog, and there was nowhere to retreat. The only thing he could do was deliberately calm his breath to reduce inhalation.

There were shadows in the fog ahead. Shen Zhixian stopped and stared for a while. Then, he slowly reached out and broke off a flowering branch on a dwarf tree next to him. He held it like a sword, tip pointing at the ground. His wrist lightly shook out and the fragile flowers on the branch trembled,

unexpectedly emitting an dangerous aura.

The shadows emerged from the depths of the fog. In front of Shen Zhixian stood a few weak and small illusion ghosts, with gray and black semi-transparent bodies. They seemed a little hesitant to approach.

The small illusion ghosts, as its name suggested, were actually the most common and lowest living creatures in the mountains and forests. It was born in suffocation, liking to entangle innocent passersby and let them fall into an endless illusion.

The little illusion ghosts hesitated for a moment and finally couldn't help but floated over to get tangled up with Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian frowned and didn't show mercy. He moved the spiritual power to the flowering branch and executed a few sword moves—He just lost his spiritual power, but not all his skills. His sword moves were still comparable.

The strand of spiritual power left by Yan Jin couldn't do big things. However, it was more than enough to kill a few ghosts.

The breeze brushed across the flowers, and the flowers on the branch were scattered into many petals. They drifted off one after another, leaving only one flower standing upright, trembling in the might of his swordplay.

Shen Zhixian drew in a breath as he held the tip of the flowering branch pointing at an angle to the ground. He stared coldly at the illusion ghosts struggling to escape. But, they burst into a haze and dispersed with the wind.

It seemed that the voice of a child came from nearby, and Shen Zhixian walked forward slowly. The fog receded like a tide, gradually revealing an image.

It was a fine beach.

At first glance, it looked very similar to the scene when they first came ashore from the bottom of the sea. But, upon closer inspection, Shen Zhixian found a difference—the edges were blurry and lifeless, indicating that this was an illusion.

There seemed to be children’s laughter echoing all around. Shen Zhixian faintly saw many children chasing laughter at the edges of those vague illusions, but this liveliness had nothing to do with him, and it had nothing to do with the single child on the beach.

The waves repeatedly rushed to the shore, rolling up many small shells and crabs, and rolling up a beautiful little blue fish.

The child was squatting on the beach, staring blankly into the distance. After the little blue fish was rolled ashore, it jumped lazily forward, just to the point where the waves could no longer roll it back into the sea. After hopping to the side of the child, it laid still.

Its color was incredibly beautiful, like the charming blue at the junction of the horizon and the sea-level line. In the sun, people wouldn’t be able to open their eyes when they looked at it.

The child was attracted by it. He looked at it quietly for a moment, and then he carefully poked at the slightly white fish belly with his finger.

The little blue fish bulged his belly and continued to stay motionless.

The child smiled a silly smile. When he saw that the waves couldn't rush up, he carefully picked up the fish, took a few steps forward, and put it back into the sea.

But after a while, the waves rolled the fish up again. The fish once again jumped a few times before laying motionless.

Fish will die without water.

The child bulged his cheeks. Although he was a fool, he understood this

reasoning. This little blue fish was so beautiful. What should he do if the fish died?

He put the little blue fish back into the sea again.

He didn’t know what happened, but after a while, the little blue fish was once again rolled up.

The child was at a loss. He looked at the beautiful little blue fish, not knowing what to do— Maybe the fish needed to be released further out?

He picked up the little blue fish again. He decided to go a little further out into the water, so that the waves could not roll up the little blue fish.

But this time, the little blue fish was not as good as he wished.

A white light flashed in the child's hands, and the child blinked, wanting to cover his eyes subconsciously. When he loosened his hands, the little blue fish fell down. When it was about to land, the white light suddenly extended and changed into a figure.

Long hair cascaded like a waterfall, hugging an androgynous face that was as beautiful as a sunset. His long and white finger gently poked at the child's forehead. When he spoke, his voice was cold and leisurely. "I want to sleep in the sun. Don't put me back now. "

His eyes were a deep ice-blue, so beautiful the child was unable to look directly at them. Then, in the next moment, the figure turned back into a small blue fish. He fluttered on the fine sand, chose a comfortable position, and warmed himself, laying motionless while sunbathing.

The child stood dully in place. He was a well-known fool in this sea village. He couldn't figure out what had happened.

He bowed his head and saw the little blue fish again, his beautiful fish scales covered with little sand.

The fish had no water—It would die.

Keeping this in mind, the child squatted down, very carefully held the little blue fish, and once again, put it in the water.

A wave rolled up and awakened the little blue fish.

It pricked its tail in the fine sand to keep it from being caught by the waves, and moved slightly, as if confused.

Outside of the illusion, even Shen Zhixian felt its suffocation and couldn't help laughing.

Just look! The power of those little devils!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 40.1

One person and one fish stared at each other for a long time, both confused.

After a while, the little blue fish hopped on its tail, jumped a little longer, and once again said, "Play over there. Don't come over and touch me again."

The child looked around at a loss, only to find that the fish was talking to me. He yelled, "But, but the fish will die without water."

He remembered that, after returning from fishing, the uncle next door had thrown a few fishes on the beach with regret, saying, “Died too quickly without water. If they're not fresh, they’re useless. "

The fishes were beautiful so the child quietly sneaked over to see them after the uncle walked away. Their cold bodies lay on the sand and could no longer move or spit bubbles.

A wave came up and swallowed them forever under the sea.

"Go back to the water ..." The child tried to catch the little blue fish with his hands, and the little blue fish rolled nimbly away, not allowing him to touch. The child was so anxious that his eyes became red. He cried, "You’re going to die without water..."

When his tears fell, the little blue fish stopped rolling. Even though the child’s eyes were blurred with tears, he actually caught the fish in his palm very accurately, holding it carefully.

So the tears fell on the little blue fish, very warm.

The little blue fish meekly let the child put him into the water. When a small wave came over, it swam forward and was not swept away, saying, "If you knew that fish will die without water, then you should that people will drown when they fall into the water. Are you dead?"

The child crouched down. He actually liked this beautiful fish. The fish didn't swim, and he stared at him with anxiety. Hearing the question, he thought hard, saying hesitantly, "I seem...to know ..."

Not long ago, the neighborhood uncle and grandma had cried for a long time by the seaside, scaring the child so much that he dared not play and only hid away. But a few words still drifted into his ears.

"There are so many people, why must it be you who drowned..."

The large boy who'd stoned him countless times in the past was now soaked with water and covered with fine sand, lying cold and unmoving on the beach. Like death. Like a fish out of water.

So, he understood another truth, which was that if a person fell into the water, he would drown.

And although he liked to stay at the beach, he dared not go too far into the water. He was a fool that nobody liked. If he fell into the water, no one would come to save him.

Seeing the child nodded, the little blue fish shook its tail and did something. Suddenly a big wave rolled up in the distance, and it landed on the shore in the blink of an eye, catching the child, who was caught off guard, and sweeping him into the water.

As soon as he entered the water, the child panicked. He'd never seen such a big wave and had never been in such deep water. He desperately thought that he was going to drown! He didn't know if his grave would be on the seafloor or if his body would be sent ashore ...

But the pain of his imagination did not appear. His eyes snapped open and he found himself sitting in a transparent ball. The sea was outside the ball, and within the ball, there was nothing but clean air.

The little blue fish swam beside him and saw him open his eyes. The fish shook his tail and said, "Don't be afraid."

The fish’s voice was very nice and gentle. The child was instantly soothed by his voice. He carefully touched the large transparent ball that surrounded him, which was warm and soft, and his little finger would protrude outward when he poked at it with his finger.

He was afraid of piercing the ball and quickly retracted his hand. Then, he sat obediently with both hands on his knees, and following his little blue fish.

It wasn't until the little blue fish stopped and called him to look around that he discovered he’d drifted unknowingly into the deep sea.

Many beautiful fishes were swimming around, and there are many small shrimps and crabs swimming leisurely in the water along the ocean floor. This was a scene he’d never seen before.

After a while, the child forgot to be afraid. He looked with wide, unblinking eyes at the scene before him, exclaiming, "Yuyu, Yuyu!" [t/n: Yu = fish]

The little blue fish just thought that he was exclaiming about those schools of fish nearby
and didn't talk back. It just swished its tail, leisurely swimming alongside the child.

However, the child continued to shout, laughing excitedly. He called the little blue fish, “Yuyu! Yuyu! Yuyu is still the best!”

The blue fish stopped and swam around the child. It looked at him with a smirk, unexpectedly discovering that this was a little fun.

"Is it fun?"

"Mmn, it's fun!"

"Are you happy?"

"Ha-happy!"

The stammer couldn't stop the happiness from overflowing.

Shen Zhixian was outside the illusion, watching as a bystander. He watched the little blue fish took the child to the sea for a day trip, and then brought him back to the shore, and then asked, "Do you understand?"

The child had not yet settled back from his excitement and the fish’s question confused him.

The little blue fish patiently persuaded, "Look, you fell into the water. Did you drown?"

The child thought for a moment and said, "No."

The little blue fish came to the conclusion. "If you fall into the water, you won't drown. So when I go ashore to bask in the sun, I won’t die. "

This confused the child. His fingers twisted together, tangling for a long time, as he thought over this reasoning.

After accepting this fallacy, he whispered, "Yuyu, today, today are you very happy?”

After the children finished playing together, they always asked each other this question. If everyone was happy, that meant that they could play together again.

The child stared at the little blue fish with eager eyes.

The little blue fish didn't know so much. It patted the water with its tail, creating a lot of small splashes, and casually said, "Just OK."

This was not the answer the child anticipated. He pursed his lips and was a little disappointed. He said with trepidation, "Then, will you come again tomorrow?"

His voice was both serious and nervous as he added, "You come tomorrow, I, I will make you happy."

This is the first time the little blue fish heard such words. It was intrigued and asked, "Don’t you have any friends? Why do you want to play with a fish?"

"No, I, I'm a fool. I can't, I can't play with them."

"Oh, you’re a fool. Only you will talk to a fish."

The child giggled. When others called him a fool, he could detect their maliciousness. But when the little blue fish called him a fool, it felt more like a praise. He said, “You, you look good, like the sky, like the sea."

The little blue fish had lived for a long time, had seen many things come and gone. And the fish had been flattered countless times, many of which were both elaborate and poetic. But, no one had used such simple and honest words to tell him that he was beautiful.

It laughed and said nothing, only tried to hurry the child back home. “Okay. It’s going to be dark soon. Go back home.”

The child went home obediently, and the little blue fish had a thought. Instead of going back to the sea, it performed a technique that hid its body and quietly followed the child home.

The child really did not have a good life. When he was born, he had a high fever, which burned his brain. At first, he was the only son in the family and

he could be taken care of. But, as his brothers and sisters were born healthy and grew up, he gradually lost his status.

His original name had long been forgotten. Now, everyone, including his parents and siblings, all called him a fool. Over time, he also felt that he was indeed a fool.

The people in the fishing village did not like fools. Children of the same age were influenced by the adults and did not like him. They never took the initiative to play with him and would even tease him.

He was said to be a fool, but he was actually just a child with a sluggish stammer and his intelligence was not on par with the children his age. Of course, he could feel the maliciousness of others. Over time, he stopped looking for other children to play with and would always sit alone quietly by the sea, sitting day by day.

The little blue fish watched him as he curled up in a small corner and fell asleep. It sighed and silently went back to the sea.

Early the next morning, the little blue fish swam ashore. It came very early and thought that the child wouldn't be there. It would go ashore and bask in the sea breeze under the sun and sleep for a while. But, there was already a person sitting there, waiting for it.

Little blue fish: "..."

It jumped with resignation in front of the child, and when the child saw it, his eyes brightened, and he said, “I, I want to make you happy today! I’ll play a game for, for you to watch.”

He took out the things held in his arms and said earnestly, "I and Mumu will play together! Play, play hide and seek! "

Indeed, in the palm of his hand was a big wooden turtle. It was worn down with age and it’s condition was very shabby, lacking arms or legs. But, the child still cherished it.

The little blue fish wanted to laugh at how he and a piece of wood would play high and seek, but it thought of the scene it saw last night and became silent.

So the child happily hid the wooden turtle in a shallow sand pit then ran a few steps away. Facing away from the side, he squatted with his hands over his eyes, “Quickly hide, quickly hide…”

He’d learned how other children played hide and seek. After stuttering to ten, he turned around. “Mumu, I, I’m coming for you!”

He pretended to look around, as if he was in a hurry, and finally found the wooden turtle in the shallow pit.

"Yuyu, look!" The child raised the wooden turtle in his hand and giggled. "I, I found it!"

The little blue fish watched him entertaining himself silly, and it silently spit out a pitiful little bubble. The bubble floated up and popped against the child’s forehead, making him laugh.

Still smiling, the child held the wooden turtle and began to explain seriously, "I, I can only play hide and seek. I play this game with everyone, although, although everyone couldn't find me."

Really a poor little spirit, little blue fish thought. How could no one find him in such a place, with so many children, and with the silly strength of this fool.

They just hated him and didn’t want to play with him.

The child was still looking at him with anticipation: "Yuyu. Is Yuyu happy?"

The little blue fish smiled and softened his voice, "Happy."

Listening to it, the child began to praise himself. He happily hugged the wooden turtle and whispered, "Look, I'm also useful. I, I can make Yuyu happy. Yuyu, can, can you be happy every day?"

This time, the little blue fish didn’t answer him and just said, “You’ve made me happy today. I want to take you to see more interesting things.”

The child was a fool, after all, and immediately forgetting his problems, nodding violently.

So one person and one fish went to the bottom of the sea for another lap. During their farewell, the child was given two beautiful large shells, and he was so happy.

He reluctantly bid farewell to the little blue fish, agreed to continue to play tomorrow, and then walked away step by step.

After watching him leave, the little blue fish shook his tail and dived back into the deep sea.

Xixi: I just got back from the Emergency Room and am too exhausted to edit right now. Please ignore any major errors and/or typos.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 40.2

Such a quiet and simple life passed for some years. During this time, the nomadic little blue fish grew used to staying there. It was woken up by a little fool every day in the sun, and it was used to watching this little fool perform a hide and seek show every day. Afterward, it would take him to the bottom of the sea to play.

Until one day, the little blue fish was suddenly awakened at noon by the scorching sun and suddenly found that the little guy didn't come that morning.

What happened?

It jumped a few times in doubt and went to wash the fine sand off in the backwater. As it washed, it heard a few children discussing the fool not far away.

"Do you know, that fool is dying..."

"My mother said he wouldn't live past today. He was feverish all night last night!"

"That's right. Maybe, we'll get his shells later. Who knew where he got so many beautiful shells, I could just die from envy! "

The little blue fish was alarmed. While jumping out of the water, it performed a trick to hide its body and quickly flew toward the child's home.

But before it left, it didn’t forget to call a big wave to splash those children

with water.

It was daytime, but there was no one at home with the feverish child. The brothers and sisters left to play with their peers. The father went out to fish at sea. The mother left to chat with other women.

… There was really no one who cared about an unconscious child who was dying.

A white light flashed, and the man with the long hair and beautiful face leaned down and looked at the poor little fellow. There was pity and helplessness in his ice-blue eyes.

A man like him could see at a glance that this little guy was dying.

Irreparable, with no cure.

……Wait.

As the man studied the child, a sudden thought came to him. He mumbled to himself for a moment and his cold hand brushed against the child’s hot forehead, sending a tendril of spiritual power to ease the child’s pain.

"I can save you, but the price is that you will never grow up again. Would you?"

The ice-blue eyes were as beautiful as the little blue fish’s scales.

The feverish child looked into the ice-blue eyes and nodded slowly and resolutely.

The man shifted into his true shape. His real shape was not the little blue fish, but a merman with a slender ice-blue fishtail. He found a slightly white scale among the thousands of exceptionally beautiful scales and gently pinched down.

Outside of the illusion, Shen Zhixian drew in a breath and took a step

forward.

—The inverse scale.

He finally saw the legendary scale that could heal human flesh and bones.

It was a pity that it was only in the illusion. Shen Zhixian reached out and his fingers passed through the illusion, unable to touch it. He pursed his lips and could only keep watching.

The scale turned into a ray of light and fell into the child's mouth.

The child got better.

Everyone was surprised. His parents were both astonished and disappointed, but they didn't say anything. They just kept him at random as usual.

This serious illness seemed like a forgettable episode, the kinds that quietly turned over in the lives of children.

But the little blue fish knew that this was just an illusion.

Even if he was an ancient demon fish who’d lived for tens of thousands of years, he couldn’t completely alter men’s life and death. Although he was able to save the child, the price was that the child would never grow up.

The years passed until it became more than ten years, and the eyes of the villagers shifted from disdain to fear as they looked at the child.

The title had also changed from a fool to a monster.

Driven out of the house by his old parents and a healthy younger brother, the child stood at the seashore looking for his little blue fish. For more than a decade, his mind was frozen with his age, and he was vaguely aware of his unusualness, but he was at a loss.

The little blue fish swam quietly and sighed.

The little blue fish took on a human form and built a house by the sea for the child.

“I’ll give you a name. You’ve been called a little fool for more than ten years.” The little blue fish bent over and rubbed the little guy’s fluffy head. After thinking it over, he said, “Let’s just call you Little Ten.”

The child hugged the man's leg happily, nodded, and called softly, "Yuyu! Yuyu!"

Little Ten settled down at the seaside and was taken care of by the little blue fish. The villagers kept away from the two of them. The little blue fish didn't care. Whatever Little Ten wanted, he could supply.

One person and one fish lived in peace in this way, until one day Yuyu carried back an unconscious man.

In the small house the little blue fish, who’d turned into a human, placed the man on the bed. His beautiful face was the first thing the emaciated man saw as he quietly opened and closed his eyes, drifting in and out of unconsciousness.

Little Ten poked at his hand blankly. "Yuyu, who is this?"

Yuyu elegantly placed his hands on his hips and casually looked at the pitiful devil that he’d just picked up. "I don't know."

Little Ten said, "He hasn't woken up yet ... he’d soaked in the water for so long, had his brain gotten soaked too?"

Yuyu nodded, "It’s good if he become a fool too. This way, he can keep you company."

Therefore, Yin Ci, who’d suffered a crushing defeat and had wandered destitute until now, hadn’t even opened his eyes yet when he heard this

short but serious conversation about whether his brain had been waterlogged.

Yin Ci: "..."

He opened his eyes with difficulty, feeling that the spiritual power in his body was completely gone. Staring at the stranger in front of him, he asked dumbly, "Am I still alive?"

He was told that he was, of course, still alive and will live happily for a long time to come.

The king was defeated, and his spiritual power was lost. He'd long lost his qualifications to go back to fight, and after this calculation, he was disheartened and simply lived in this unknown small fishing village.

Yuyu breathed a sigh of relief and entrusted him with the heavy task of caring for the child. Then he returned to the sea to continue as a little blue fish.

In later illusions, just like watching a TV show full of dog blood, Shen Zhixian watched as Yin Ci's eyes gradually changed toward Yuyu.

He sighed.

Hey, the poor miserable devil was going to fall in love with the beautiful merman who'd saved him.

Sure enough, one night, Yuyu received a different kind of emotion from Yin Ci. Yuyu hardly stayed overnight in the small house and the man couldn't help himself.

Quietly, a hot kiss fell on that stunning face.

Then he rushed to the door in flight, not daring to turn around and stay.

So he didn't know. After he left, the sleeping merman's eyes fluttered open

and a familiar compassion appeared in those ice-blue eyes.

Yuyu was leaving.

Regardless of whether it was Yin Ci or Little Ten, they could not convince him to stay. Yuyu simply said that he was going to another place, and he might never return.

He was an unrestrained fish and did not belong anywhere.

He'd thought quite well that Little Ten was already under Yin Ci's care. They were ordinary people and more suitable for living together. He was just a fish that did not belong here and had a long life. He shouldn't have been bound here for so long.

Yuyu ruthlessly left.

Then, after a long period of depression, Yin Ci went crazy.

In the end, he was a cultivator, and there were various ways to regain his practice. But this time, Yin Ci did not follow the old path; he became a devil cultivator instead.

He took Little Ten and searched the seas for that beautiful little blue fish, for the beautiful and exquisite man, for many years.

His obsession burrow deeper and deeper. After he became a devil, he often had trouble controlling his emotions. The desire to possess was magnified many times. His eyes gradually turned red, and Little Ten sometimes didn't dare talk to him at all.

Who knew how many years they'd searched, until they finally saw the fish they'd been looking for.

The elegant and lazy man had shifted into a merman and was resting tiredly on the edge of a rock. An epidemic had broken out in one of the cities, and he'd worked hard to stop the tragedy. He ended up exhausting most of his

spiritual energy and was exhausted. He squinted under the sun, his slender fishtail slapping the water surface.

The devil cultivator looked at the ice blue tail with eyes as red as blood. .

He raised his hand, spread his fingers, and a delicate ring hook emerged from it. There were countless dense runes on the ring’s body, each one for imprisonment.

Suddenly, the sharp pain of his fishtail being punctured made the man jerk and began to struggle violently. He frowned, gasping in agony, and turned to meet a pair of cold, red eyes.

"I found you," the red-eyed man said hoarsely. He stood waist-deep in water, locking the imprisonment ring on the fishtail.

Blood spilled from the injured fishtail, staining the seawater underneath red.

The man panted, his chest undulating, as he opened his mouth to say something, but Shen Zhixian couldn't hear it. A sword broke through the void, and the illusion shattered into thousands of pieces. Man, fishtail, and ring hook. The blood suddenly dissipated, and only "I found you" was still lingering clearly in his ears.

—Wrong.

Shen Zhixian jerked in surprise when someone silently came from behind him and hugged him. He hurriedly raised the hand that still held the flower branch, intending to make a move without turning around. But, he felt the hot and familiar atmosphere at his back and suddenly stopped, his wrist lowering.

"A’jin?"

Yan Jin's breath was a little unstable, and there was a faint layer of red in his eyes. He pressed his mouth next to Shen Zhixian's ear and softly repeated the man’s words, "I found you."

His tone was a bit strange. Shen Zhixian keenly thought that there was something wrong, but he didn’t say anything and only turned his head to look at him.

Yan Jin was hugging him too tightly, with his lowered head tilted forward. When Shen Zhixian turned his head, his lips brushed lightly across Yan Jin’s cheek.

Under the soft touch, the two became simultaneously startled.

Xixi: Thank you all for your concerns. I didn't mean to worry you. My daughter hurt her arm so, after I got home from work, I took her to the ER to get an x-ray done to make sure it wasn't broken, and it wasn't.

But, poor Little Ten and poor Yuyu. Sometimes, no good deeds go unpunished.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 41

Shen Zhixian's first thought was to pretend nothing had happened, and his second thought was that he was really bad for not apologizing after doing this bad thing.

...Even though it was unintentional.

He looked at Yan Jin's expression and ultimately decided to swallow back his apology..... He sensed that if he spoke, something disastrous would happen.

He pretended to arbitrarily take a step back—without seeming like he was retreating. Yan Jin's hands tightened around his waist, and Shen Zhixian said helplessly: "A’jin, loosen your hands."

Yan Jin looked at him quietly, and his hands slightly loosened. Just slightly, with his hands still clasped around Shen Zhixian’s waist.

Shen Zhixian felt quite uncomfortable being looked at like this and opened his mouth to speak But he suddenly noticed the faint haze of red in Yan Jin’s eyes. As soon as Shen Zhixian saw this, his heart tightened. He instinctively grasped Yan Jin’s wrist, thinking to check his body before he realized that he had no spiritual power.

Shen Zhixian’s action was hard to cover up. Yan Jin understood and the redness in his eyes deepened. He whispered, “If I enter the devil’s path, will Sui Xian hate me?”

After reading so many books, Shen Zhixian instinctively knew that when a

person asked such a question, he was not far from entering the devil’s path.

Shen Zhixian was a little stunned. In the original book, was this how Yan Jin became a devil cultivator?

As he absorbed this knowledge, he forgot to respond for a moment. Yan Jin saw that he was quiet, and his heart gradually sank, from scalding hot to ice cold, and his whole body couldn't help but shake.

Just when Yan Jin was almost unable to bear it, Shen Zhixian regained his senses, and said with a casual expression, "Immortal cultivation and devil cultivation are just different ways of study. In essence, there is no real difference between the two, so why hate it?"

He reached out to pat Yan Jin's hand, but he realized that he still had the flower branch and ended up handing it over to Yan Jin instead. He got out of the situation and went to the front to see the child hiding behind a tree.

Yan Jin’s empty hand suddenly held a flower branch. Stunned, he looked down at the single flower, which trembled with half its petals gone. He didn’t know what to think, but in the end, he just turned his wrist, putting the flower branch away.

He stepped forward toward Shen Zhixian, who was not far away and was squatting halfway down to communicate with the child.

The illusion was shattered, and the three souls and seven mortal bodies that had been dismantled now spontaneously gathered together and reunited as one person. But, because his soul had been scattered for too long, he couldn't merge well, and the whole person looked faded.

"Little Ten?" Shen Zhixian called.

The child nodded timidly, with a little expectation in his eyes. "You, did you see Yuyu?"

"Where is Yuyu?" Shen Zhixian asked in a gentle voice.

"Yuyu, Yuyu ..." Little Ten thought hard for a moment, then hesitated and turned in a certain direction, "Yuyu is in it ... I can't get in ..."

As he said this, his voice was full of sorrow. His body began to flicker. “Yuyu...Yuyu isn’t happy? Can Yuyu laugh?” His eyes gradually turned dull. “I’ll play hide and see for Yuyu...Make Yuyu laugh…”

Shen Zhixian followed his gaze, watching as the fog spread out and a barrier gradually emerged.

Little Ten staggered toward the barrier and tried to pass through but was bounced back. For a second, his soul scattered, becoming disorganized.

Shen Zhixian also followed, tentatively touching the barrier.

The barrier glowed slightly.

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look at Yan Jin, who instantly got his message. Before he could say anything, Yan Jin lightly grabbed his waist and pushed forward, passing the barrier quite easily. After all, the barrier wasn’t intended to block people out. It was just that Little Ten’s soul was incomplete, making him unable to pass through.

As soon as they passed through the barrier, the sound of the waves washed over them. When the mist disappeared before his eyes, Shen Zhixian could clearly see that they were at sea.

The endless, blue sea was like jade, sparkling in the sun and reflecting the floating clouds in the sky.

Not far away, a boulder stood motionless among the waves. A merman with an ice-blue fish tail was sitting quietly on a large boulder, with half of his fishtail hidden under the water. He looked at the distant sea from time to time, humming a small tune.

Noticing their movements, the man turned his head, and the long hair like

waterfall was blown by the wind, making his skin appear more white and snowy in contrast.

When Shen Zhixian saw him, somehow, a strange man's voice burst into his head.

“I’m willing to build thousands of illusions for him, creating the boundless sea, the sound of winds and waves, the spoiled sun and the bright moon, the clouds and stars...all with no deficiency. All except one thing. I would never allow him to leave me.”

When this voice appeared, Shen Zhixian subconsciously glanced at Yan Jin, even as the latter pulled forward and waded to the merman’s side.

He retracted his gaze, frowned slightly, and there seemed to be some noisy sounds intermittently weaving in and out of his mind, unclear and indistinct. He listened carefully but could not make out much.

His head seemed to full of memories and feelings that didn't belong to him, which caused a moment of confusion in his thoughts, and he couldn’t even react as he was pulled in front of the merman.

The merman stopped singing, and his beautiful ice-blue eyes gave Shen Zhixian a glance. His eyebrows slightly rose. "Heart ailment?"

The moment he said the words, Yan Jin's expression flickered, and without hesitation, he dropped to his knees, which knocked hard against the rocks despite the water as buffer. His voice was muffled, "I beg Senior for a scale."

Shen Zhixian was astonished by the muffled sound and his heart trembled. He subconsciously tried to pull Yan Jin back up, distress rising unbidden in his eyes.

The merman took in all of this, and for a split second, he looked distracted. After a moment, he gave a small smile, raised his hand slightly, and a gentle force pulled back Yan Jin up into a standing position.

"This heart ailment, I’m afraid ordinary scales can't save it. You must use the inverse scale,” The merman unhurriedly said in a clear and cold voice, calmly displaying his inverse scale. "I have only half of the inverse scale left."

Shen Zhixian's heart sank. Of course he knew how important the inverse scale was. If it was an ordinary scale, it wouldn’t be a problem. But, to the merman, losing the inverse scale would be equivalent to losing more than half his life.

Yan Jin obviously thought of this too. He pursed his lips and was about to speak, but the merman raised his hand, and his long fingertips touched his lips in a gesture for silence. "I’d already lived for a long time. Since you have already come this far, it would be fine to give you the inverse scale. It’s just…”

He paused, and then sighed before opening his mouth to add, “It’s just that changing one’s lifespan and altering fate inevitably comes with a price...I once used the inverse scale to save Little Ten, and the price was that he would never grow up. In your circumstances, if you should use the inverse scale, I can’t determine what the price might be.”

“Does Senior have a solution to this problem?”

The merman thought for a moment and said without certainty, "Some thousand of years ago, I came upon a place called the Undead City. It was said that within that city was a Soul Tracing Grass, which may relieve the side effects of the scale.”

He looked at both of them with a serious face. Then, he smiled and said, "If you can’t find it now, it's okay to just use a little bit now. At least it will allow you to use spiritual power for a short time and you won't get sick. In the future, you’ll need to find the Soul Tracing Grass and then completely repair the heart arteries and veins. "

Shen Zhixian hesitated. He’d always thought that these ancient fish demons

had disappeared long ago. Even if they found the inverse scale, it would only be a relic left by chance. Who knew that he would actually see the merman alive now?

If the merman lost his inverse scale, he would surely die.

Shen Zhixian’s heart was tormented as he struggled with the difficult decision. Yan Jin noticed his entanglement and quietly took his hand.

The warmth in his hand made Shen Zhixuan's heart also feel warm. Without thinking about it, he tilted his head, his lips curved in a slight smile.

The lazy fishtail patted the water surface and the sound of splashing water brought them back to the situation at hand. "You came from outside... Did you see Little Ten? What is he doing now?"

This question was not difficult to answer, but the truth might seem a little too cruel to the mermaid. Having watched the events within the illusion, Shen Zhixian knew that the sentiments between the little blue fish and Little Ten were actually better than family. The child may be foolish and slow-witted, but he was quite loveable. Now, he’d fallen to such straits…

After thinking about it, he still found it difficult to tell the complete truth. "Little Ten plays hide and seek with the other nine Little Tens. He misses you very much, and asked us to ask you… Are you happy?"

It took only a moment for the merman to understand. He was silent for a long time, his expression softening, and he murmured, "He truly is a little fool..."

His hand held the inverse scale, and his ice-blue eyes gazed directly at Shen Zhixian. "I can give you the inverse scale. But first, you must go and gather Little Ten’s soul for me and send him to reincarnation. "

"Incomplete souls can't cross this barrier. After you gather his soul, quietly send him in for me to take a glance... forget it. " He paused for a moment, then shook his head, covering up his disappointment and frustration. He

added, "...Just let it be. There’s no need to see each other. Let him go sooner."

Meeting would only cause more pain and entanglement. It would be better to recall fond memories instead. Shen Zhixian understood in his heart and nodded silently. Then, he went back out with Yan Jin.

Little Ten was still staring at this place. He’d tried to cross the barrier countless times, but he was ruthlessly pushed back to the ground every time.

His soul was probably in acute pain. His eyes were red from shedding tears so hard. When he saw Shen Zhixuan coming out, he ran up and asked, "Yuyu, Yuyu?"

Shen Zhixian rubbed the boy’s head and softly said, "Yuyu is back in the sea. You should sleep. You can see Yuyu when you wake up."

Little Ten twisted his fingers and understood, "Really, really and truly? "

“Mmn, Little Ten must be obedient." Yan Jin's previous strand of spiritual energy hadn't been used up yet. Shen Zhixian used the last bit of energy to draw a condense soul talisman, which turned into a tendril of smoke that merged into Little Ten. His soul gradually solidified, and his expression became increasingly more empty.

Shen Zhixian was a little bit embarrassed. He and Yan Jin were both sword cultivators. They didn’t have Duan Yuan’s ability to use sound to ferry the soul into reincarnation. He still remembered the soul reincarnation song. Maybe…he could try to sing?

As soon as this thought flashed, he heard a cold, unhurried song, sounding quiet and peaceful, and full of soothing power.

Under this familiar singing voice, Little Ten’s soul gradually began to fade. When he was about to disappear, he suddenly awakened and began to struggle.

"Yuyu! Yuyu ..." A faint, almost inaudible shout sounded and became a deep crying voice. The gentle singing faltered for a moment and then continued.

But Little Ten couldn't withstand the call of reincarnation under heaven and earth. His crying gradually faded and his figure completely dissipated, until there was no trace left.

When returning to the merman, Shen Zhixian's mood was a bit heavy. The merman looked calm as usual, and when he saw that Shen Zhixian seemed to be in a trance, he smiled softly and turned to comfort him, "In this world, parting is too common. Don’t take it too much to heart. "

Shen Zhixian shook his head slightly, not speaking.

The merman had been trapped here for nearly a thousand years and didn’t know much about the outside world. He could only guess the situation regarding the secret realm. He inquired about them, and mumbled to himself for a moment before sighing. "This secret realm is about to disappear. A few days ago, I felt that Yin Ci’s spirit core was broken, and knew that this day would come sooner or later ... Actually, it should have come a long time ago ... But this place was unable to bear it. "

After Yin Ci entered the devil’s path, he worked hard to design this secret realm for the small blue fish in captivity. The entirety of the secret realm was fully supported by Yin Ci. Later, when Yin Ci died, it continued to be supported by Yin Ci’s spirit core.

His spirit core was no better than the human himself. After feeling the lack of devil qi in the secret realm, it began to actively search for those with devil qi like Yin Ci. Then, it would absorb them into the secret realm and integrate their devil qi into the secret realm to sustain it.

In the early days, it was very picky and would only pick devil cultivators. Later, it couldn't sustain itself. It could only reluctantly accept cultivators who took the initiative to enter. As a result, it ended up hanging around Xin City.

Shen Zhixian said in astonishment, "The secret realm sought only devil cultivators? But I ..."

The secret realm had taken the initiative to bring him in. But, he was a true immortal cultivator and had no need for devil cultivation.

The merman was surprised for a moment. He thought that Shen Zhixian took the initiative to came in himself, but that wasn't it?

He raised his hand, gesturing for Shen Zhixian to approach. Then, his fingertip pressed against Shen Zhixian’s forehead. A moment later, he frowned, "You have devil qi on your body."

Shen Zhixian exclaimed, "Ah?"

His first thought was that during the Qingyun Sect’s Sword Competition, he’d absorb a strand of devil qi from Yan Jin. But, upon second thought, he realized that couldn't be right. That strand of devil qi was very weak and had disappeared after a few days. It was impossible for the devil qi to stay in his body for so long without being noticed by him. Without being noticed by the Fourth Elder...

As he was thinking, the merman gently placed his finger on the corner of his eye, where the teardrop mole was located. Suddenly a tingling sensation rose up, and the place became scorching hot, making him frown. He could only tighten his hold on Yan Jin's hand, trying to endure without calling out.

The merman completely stripped away the disguise on his face, exposing the teardrop mole. But, at this moment, the teardrop mole was no longer red but a dark color. The moment it was revealed, the teardrop mole suddenly transformed into a strand of black qi and quickly plunged into the sea!

It moved too fast, and they were unprepared. They couldn’t catch it and could only watch it disappear into the waves.

"Master ..." Yan Jin hadn’t seen this face for a long time. As a result, he was

a little unaccustomed to it. But what shocked him even more was that the tear mole at the corner of Shen Zhixian's eye was gone!

Shen Zhixian touched the corner of his eye and realized that he did really lose the slight bump. He touched and touched his face in shock—What was going on?

How could there be devil qi on him?

Was this teardrop mole a seal that imprisoned this strand of devil qi?

The original book didn’t mention this at all!

He was still thinking about it, but suddenly the merman sensed something. His expression changed slightly, and he immediately urged, "The mystery realm can no longer be sustained—I can still support it for you for a while."

Without hesitation, he sent the last half of his inverse scale to Shen Zhixian. Then, biting his lip and swallowing the bloody copper taste that instantly surged into his throat, he ordered Yan Jin, "You will need to help fuse the scale and repair the heart veins for him..."

Time was tight, and Shen Zhixian saw that the decision had already been made. He pursed his lips, suppressing the doubts to the bottom of his heart. He bowed respectfully and gratefully to the merman, and then sat down with Yan Jin on a large rock and crossed his knees.

Although the big rock was large, the two sat cross-legged so it fit just right. Their palms faced each other while their knees were pressed against each other. Shen Zhixuan closed his eyes.

The merman took the small piece of inverse scale and sent it forward. The inverse scale turned into a blue ray of light and sank into Shen Zhixian's chest.

Immediately, Shen Zhixian felt a gentle spiritual power belonging to the ancient merman, which began to infiltrate and repair his heart veins. With it

came Yan Jin ’s spiritual power, carefully protecting his spirit root and not letting those overpowering spiritual power hurt him.

The contract within the depths of his spiritual sea began to grow hot. The spiritual sea was a very important place for cultivators, and Yan Jin also divided a little of his power to protect it.

Shen Zhixian wasn’t prepared for Yan Jin, so he wasn’t aware when the strand of Yan Jin’s spiritual power entered his spiritual sea.

The contract felt Yan Jin's spiritual power and began to tremble violently, making Shen Zhixian’s back suddenly turn rigid. The indescribable sensation came from within the depths of his spiritual sea, making him hold in his breath as he resisted the urge to tremble along with it.

He thought it was just an accident, but for the next half hour, he thoroughly felt what torture was.

Yan Jin's spiritual power repeatedly provoked the contract, and the originally aloof contract resembled a sixteen-year-old girl in the midst of a dalliance, bashful and incessantly trembling. The sensation finally caused Shen Zhixian to also tremble incessantly.

—What plaything was this! It was just shit! False contract! Must be returned!

He gritted his teeth and held back the strange feeling, which wasn’t pain or anything like that, but ...

An idea suddenly came to his mind--Hug him.

Shen Zhixian: "?????"

Hug whom? Whom to hug?

Hug Yan Jin? Hug him?

—No way!

These weren’t his thoughts. It was as if there was a person in his mind, constantly forcing these thoughts on him!

After that small piece of scale was completely integrated into his heart, Shen Zhixian finally couldn't hold it in anymore. His body fell backward the moment he was released. Seeing this and not wanting him to fall into the sea, Yan Jin immediately pulled him back. As a result, instead of falling into the sea, he ended up falling into Yan Jin’s arms instead.

He didn't have the energy to sit up straight. He was breathing heavily, his trembling hands clutching Yan Jin’s sleeves, as Yan Jin gently wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

As the scale was merging, Yan Jin had also taken the opportunity to resolve the spiritual power seal that Fourth Elder had placed on Shen Zhixian. At this time, the long imprisoned spiritual power was circulating wildly in his body, making him unable to say a word.

Yan Jin knew his situation and gripped his hand. He still didn't withdraw his spiritual power and instead focused on helping him calm down the spiritual agitation.

After a moment, Shen Zhixuan took a breath, and borrowing Yan Jin's strength, he tilted his head to look at the merman.

Even though the merman had just lost his inverse scale, he still tried his best to maintain the realm for the both of them. But, his life was finally at its limit. His tail patted slowly and weakly in the water, and Shen Zhixian saw that there was a scar on the tailbone.

It was the scar left by Yin Ci's ring.

But the hook was no longer there.

Did Yin Ci take it down? Or had he freed himself?

The merman lost his strength and his tail sank into the water, no longer moving. His gaze drifted away from them and into the distance.

He began to sing a slow song in an ancient and mysterious language, the tune free and unrestrained.

Shen Zhixian listened in a startled daze and suddenly felt a rush of sorrow in his heart. He looked at the ice blue distance and asked softly, "We still don’t know Senior’s name…?”

The waves crashed in the distance, always moving and never stopping. He suddenly felt the sorrow of parting, and the sound of the waves only exacerbated his sadness.

The merman rose up and dived into the sea. His clear and leisurely voice blended in with the sound of the waves.

".....Before, I had no name. Then I became Yuyu, and later .....My name became Yin Gui."

The wind magnified his regret and carried his words back to them.

Xixi: Yuyu’s final name is interesting. The “Yin” in Yin Gui is the same as the “Yin” in Yin Ci. Gui means to return or to belong to. So, my interpretation of the name is that he’s saying that he belongs to/with Yin Ci. Or, Yin Ci changed his name to Yin Gui as a mark of ownership. According to the author’s note, it seemed like a lot happened between Yin Ci and Yuyu. The author had intended to write more but she ultimately decided not to focus too much on this side-story. But, I kind-of wanted Little Ten and Yuyu to be reincarnated as normal people, to meet, and to fall in love instead. I mean, Little Ten entered reincarnation first so he’ll be older this time.

Also, in Chapter 34, I translated “lingdan” as Spirit Pill because “dan” can mean pellet or pill. But, with more context provided here and some research

done on my part, it seemed like it’s supposed to be Spirit Core instead. Sorry, guys, I’m a newbie with all these terms. I’ll go back and change it.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 42

Yuyu finally returned to the sea. After he left, the waves receded quickly. The stone on which he had sat suddenly dissipated into smoke, exposing an ice coffin half-submerged in water.

The coffin was almost transparent. Shen Zhixian saw the coffin at a glance and watched blankly as the two items inside changed into two glimmers of light and submerged into the sea water.

The ice coffin shattered with a sound. The whole secret realm trembled and thin slivers of cracks began to appear. Yan Jin grabbed Shen Zhixian's waist and, without hesitation, jumped toward the shattering ice coffin.

Shen Zhixian closed his eyes subconsciously, and in the next moment, a cold sensation swept across his body, just like when he’d came. When he opened his eyes, he found that they’d returned to Xin City.

In the past, after this secret realm swallowed people, it would silently drift away. However, in recent years, it’d been lacking in devil qi, causing it to become more and more desperate. This time there were a lot of people who were swallowed.

The secret realm had remained closed after Yan Jin forced it open. However, there were still many cultivators who didn’t want to leave and would wander around outside every day. At this time, when the secret realm suddenly spit out many people and disappeared, they were all stunned.

After a few moments, those people immediately approached the people who’d came out of the secret realm to ask about the situation inside.

Yan Jin's aura was too cold, and his body language was full of rejections. No one dared to come over, preventing them from being besieged.

After only a month in the secret realm, Shen Zhixian looked at the lively scene in front of him and felt as if a long time had passed.

The timeflow within the illusion about Yuyu and Little Ten was different. A few years inside the illusion was just the blink of an eye to the outside world. When Shen Zhixian was inside the illusion, he'd "lived" for many years.

"Big Brother Sui! Big Brother Yan!" Not far away, Duan Yuan waved at them while running quickly toward them. After having been separated from them for a while, she noticed the intimacy between them and half-jokingly said, "Big Brother Sui is finally here? You must be really concerned about Big Brother Yan."

Shen Zhixian was silent for a moment. Then, he tentatively asked, "We haven't met in the secret realm?"

Duan Yuan immediately shook her head. "No. These days, I'd been alone—I only saw the man who did big brother's divination that day."

She remembered the divination hexagram and asked curiously, "The man said that Big Brother Sui will get his wish on this trip. What did the big brother encounter?"

Shen Zhixian was silent for a moment, hypothesizing that the secret realm must have confused everyone's memories before it dissipated. He sighed silently, thinking of the fish scale, and nodded slightly. "Let's just forget it."

Since he didn't continue, Duan Yuan knew he didn't want to talk about it. She didn't ask anymore and just said in a relaxed manner, "After staying in the secret realm for a long time, I need to find a place to take a good rest."

Xin City was full of cultivators so Shen Zhixian didn't want to go stay

there. It was just too noisy and crowded. Since it was still early, they simply went to a nearby town.

On the way, they exchanged itineraries, and Duan Yuan was regretful that they would soon part ways.

"I found a spirit fruit in the secret realm. This spirit fruit must be eaten with another spirit fruit to be effective… Unfortunately, this spirit fruit is far away." Duan Yan sighed. "I will continue to go south."

Shen Zhixian sighed with regret. "We have to go west ... "

The disguise on his face had been completely stripped away in the secret realm. At this moment, it was only supported by simple illusion. If they remain together for a long time, Duan Yuan might eventually notice the flaws. Shen Zhixian didn't want to reveal his identity, and at the same time, he needed to find the Undead City.

It'd been a long time since they were together, and the conversations were very enjoyable. Before parting, they decided to have a good meal and drink a parting wine.

The inn in town was in poor condition, and Shen Zhixian, who was rich in wealth, found an empty house with a courtyard. He used a bag of money in exchange for the owner to allow them to rest there for two days.

The three went out to eat some simple meals and then bought a few jars of wine and some snacks. When they returned to the courtyard, they sat drinking under the moonlight.

Duan Yuan was sad when she thought of leaving, and she took one drink after another. She tried to drink away her sorrows until she eventually became drunk.

Duan Yuan took a swig and drunkenly said, "I'm having a good time. It's so nice to get to know you..."

She began to mumble and Shen Zhixian responded to her with a laugh. He'd also been drinking alcohol.

This wine was brewed by the residents of the town. Of course, the taste wasn't as good as the special spirit wine in Qingyun Sect, but at this time, it wasn't too bad.

Yan Jin drank only a small cup poured by Shen Zhixian himself. Shen Zhixian didn't force him and continued to talk with Duan Yuan.

The bright moon was like a jade plate hanging high in the sky. This drink was very strong. After drinking for more than a round, Shen Zhixian actually felt a little drunk.

Duan Yan, who was drunk, smirked while holding her cup.

Yan Jin calmly embraced the person next to him, wrapping his arm around him, lest he become too drunk and fall to the ground.

Shen Zhixian was unexpectedly unaware and, instead, took the opportunity to lean on Yan Jin's shoulder. He was only half-concentrating, with cheeks flushed in liveliness, as he held Yan Jin's hand and began to sing.

His singing had always been free and easy-going, brimming with the pride and chivalry of the Jianghu. Duan Yuan listened quietly to it and eventually became sentimental. When Shen Zhixian finished singing, she let out an exclamation of awe, her eyes bright with unshed tears. Despite being drunk, she nimbly stood and jumped in front of Shen Zhixian.

"Big brother Sui, I...I really..." Her tongue felt too large for her mouth and she began to stutter. "I really! I like you so much!"

After speaking the beginning, Duan Yuan couldn't bear it anymore. She grabbed her cup of wine, drank it boldly, as if for bravery. "Big Brother Sui is really good! I, I want to be together with big brother every day..."

Shen Zhixian was startled by her nonsense. Before he had time to respond,

he was suddenly chilled by the coldness emitting from the person next to him. He tilted his head and looked at Yan Jin with drunken eyes. He called softly and doubtfully, "A’jin? "

Yan Jin was silent as he raised his hand to tuck Shen Zhixian’s hair behind his ear.

It made Shen Zhixian a little itchy and he raised his hand to catch Yan Jin’s hand.

Yan Jin's hand was very warm, and although Shen Zhixian’s heart ailment was greatly eased by the fish scale, the coldness in his body still required some time for adjustments. As a result, his hand was still cold, and he would instinctively stick to warm things. Feeling the temperature of Yan Jin's palm at this moment, he unconsciously stuck his hand over, and the little crab stretched his claws, gently poking at Yan Jin's palm.

Yan Jin's whole heart was softened by his poking, causing his cold expression to ease a bit.

Duan Yuan spoke more and more exaggeratedly. After listening, it seemed that she thought she had fallen in love with Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian felt bad even though he was drunk and quickly interrupted, "Thank you for your love, but I’m an ordinary person. I really can't do this with you ...We’ll say goodbye today and hope to see each other again in the future. If not, then…

His words had the taste of rejection. Duan Yuan faintly felt that Shen Zhixian had misunderstood her meaning, and she immediately rushed to explain, “Big Brother Sui, you misunderstood me. I actually have a secret that I’ve kept hidden. But now, I can’t bear it. I’m actually, actually not a girl!”

He finally told his secret and his heart felt free. He spoke with no restraint, his eyes bright with tears, and his voice full of emotions. "When I was young, I was very weak and would often fall sick. It was said that if I’m

raised as a girl, I can be safe after turning 20 years old ... It was fine at home at the beginning, but then they sent me to Qianyin Pavilion... "

The Duan family originally intended for Duan Yuan to practice cultivation so he would become strong and not be easily fell by the wind. But they lucked out by chance. The Third Chamber Master of Qianyin Pavilion... that was, Duan Yuan’s master, saw him and accepted him as a personal disciple.

There were more women in Qianyin Pavilion, and there were more trivia among women than among men, with all kinds of strengths not inferior to the men. Duan Yuan rose up to become the disciple of the Third Master and immediately attracted everyone's attention.

Duan Yuan said incoherently, "They always wanted to talk about rouge and cosmetics, this color and that color, always ask me which one looks good—but those rouge were obviously same color! I never liked these!"

"They also boasted that I look good, while secretly whispering nonsense behind my back about how I only have one face and am clearly just an empty flower vase, boohoo!

So he was really afraid to communicate with the sisters from the same school, and even more afraid to go out with them. But they still found him to talk about clothes, jewelry, rouge, cosmetics, and more. However, once he decided to fake a scar on his face, they began to avoid him.

This time he finally got the chance to go out to practice alone and was fortunate to get to know Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin—besides, Shen Zhixian’s free and easy chivalry made him admire him more and more.

That was the kind of hero who he’d loved and longed for very much since childhood!

He spilled the beans so easily that Shen Zhixian: "..."

Shen Zhixian: "!!!!!!"

Shen Zhixian: "Boy ????"

He changed his tone in shock and looked at Duan Yuan in disbelief.

Sitting across from him was such a big, beautiful lady! Why did she suddenly become a boy?!

He didn't know for a moment whether he should be shocked that Duan Yuan was actually a boy, or that poor Duan Yuan was struggling to survive in a group of beauties. After a moment, he chose to look at Yan Jin.

—Is this okay?

—Wasn’t this Yan Jin's female lead?

Yan Jin had misunderstood what he meant, and his expression sank slightly. He whispered, "Is Sui Xian sad?”

Shen Zhixian denied. "No ..."

What was wrong with Yan Jin! Shouldn't it be his sadness?! A good female lead suddenly turned into a good brother? Who could stand it?!

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin looked at each other for a moment, before he turned to look at Duan Yuan to confirm one last time, “...You’re a man?”

Duan Yuan was muddle-headed by alcohol. After hearing that his Big Brother Sui didn’t believe him, he was in a hurry to think of how to prove it. He caught Shen Zhixian’s hand that was resting on the table and placed it on his chest.

"Big Brother Sui, you touch... I'm really a boy!"

Shen Zhixian hadn't even returned from the shock of having a good female lead suddenly turning into a male lead, and now his hand was suddenly caught and placed on a delicate chest. He was shocked even more, half-

awakened from his drunkenness, and immediately drew back his hand as if he was touching a hot potato.

"If you have something to say, just say it. Don't do anything--"

"I'm not really lying to you, Big Brother Sui."

So one wanted to pull, one wanted to hide, one wanted to protect. The scene became a mess of troops and horses, causing the two wine jars to shatter in the chaos.

Shen Zhixian was in a hurry to avoid him and didn’t care much. He turned around to hide in Yan Jin’s arms. Yan Jin guarded him and separated him from Duan Yuan. He said, "Okay, don't make any more noises."

Yan Jin's aura was too cold, and Duan Yuan was a little frightened of him. After hearing Yan Jin’s words, he froze, afraid to move. "Big Brother Yan ..."

Yan Jin showed no mercy. "Go back to sleep."

Duan Yuan looked at Yan Jin with a sullen look, and then looked again at Shen Zhixian. But, the object of his admiration was hiding behind the fierce Big Brother Yan and was not looking at him at all.

Although drunk, he was still afraid to rebel against Yan Jin. As a result, Duan Yuan swallowed his grievance and stumbled back to his room.

Having finally solved a little drunkard, Yan Jin immediately poured all his mind on the big drunkard in his arms. "Sui Xian?"

Shen Zhixian wanted to drink happily and deliberately didn’t suppress it with spiritual power. He also got up and held on to Yan Jin stupidly. "I want to go back ..."

After saying this, he pushed Yan Jin away and stumbled forward. Yan Jin saw his drunken posture and pressed his lips together as he followed closely

behind.

When walking into the room, Shen Zhixian stumbled over the threshold and nearly fell down. Yan Jin’s quickly caught him and helped him to the bed, where he sat.

"Wait a while. I'll fetch some water."

"Mmn." Shen Zhixian sat lazily, eyes squinting and lethargic. He didn't even hear what Yan Jin said.

Yan Jin fetched water, heated it slightly with a technique, took a handkerchief from the storage bag, soaked it in water, and used it to wipe Shen Zhixian's face and hands.

Shen Zhixian was drunk and only felt as if he’d become a noodle that was being rubbed by Yan Jin. He tilted his head, dodging Yan Jin's hand, and muttered, "No more rubbing ..."

So Yan Jin put down the handkerchief, poured a cup of water for him, and carefully helped him drink.

The water temperature was just right. Shen Zhixian drank the whole cup of water, and licked his lips. As a result of drinking, his lip color was a little bit redder than usual, glistening with water. Seeing this, Yan Jin’s heart flamed up. He closed his eyes to calm himself down before opening them again.

After helping Shen Zhixian lie down, Yan Jin said in a husky voice, "Rest."

After Shen Zhixian drank the water, he became a little more awake. Seeing Yan Jin leave, he subconsciously grabbed his sleeve and softly said, “Wait a minute...Don’t go. I can’t sleep. Talk with me.”

He forgot that he’d recovered his spiritual power and his pull was more forceful than expected. Yan Jin was caught off guard, causing his knee to knock against the edge of the bed and he fell forward.

Shen Zhixian was still lying on the bed. No wanting to crush him, Yan Jin reacted quickly, propping himself up with his hands on either side of Shen Zhixian’s body. Their posture suddenly became ambiguous.

Shen Zhixian’s hand was still holding on to Yan Jin’s sleeve. He stared unblinkingly at the person so close to him.

Yan Jin lowered his head and looked at Shen Zhixian quietly.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes were bright with crystalline water, and interwoven with a layer of drunkenness were traces of soberness and confusion. His lips gleamed wetly and Yan Jin could almost taste the wine in his warm breath. Yan Jin, who was not drunk, became intoxicated.

“Sui Xian…”

He murmured, his voice low and husky.

Shen Zhixian mumbled, "Ah ..."

He frowned in confusion, suddenly feeling as if there was a voice within the chaos of his mind that sounded a little like Yan Jin and a little not.

He was drunk and, without thinking about it, he repeated the voice in his head, “...Kiss, kiss him?”

Shen Zhixian was suspicious. He looked at Yan Jin with misty eyes, feeling confused and wondering why such a voice appeared in his mind.

In the end, Yan Jin couldn’t help himself. A flame swept across his chest, filling his whole body with heat. His throat moved and, in the next moment, he lowered his head to cover those lips with his own.

Shen Zhixian froze.

At first, Yan Jin didn’t dare go too far. He merely pressed his lips lightly

against Shen Zhixian’s lips, not willing to use force. As he did so, he carefully waited for a response. When he saw that Shen Zhixian neither resisted nor struggled, he moved his mouth carefully and stretched out his tongue to taste Shen Zhixian’s mouth.

Sweet, soft and scented with wine.

By this time, Shen Zhixian had completely returned to his senses. His intoxication fled, and astonishment flashed across his eyes. He subconsciously pushed Yan Jin away. It turned out that Yan Jin had anticipated his movements long before he made them. He grabbed both of Shen Zhixian’s hands and raised them over his head to prevent him from moving.

Shen Zhixian felt as if his body was sinking and he could feel Yan Jin’s lower region pressed against him.

He felt a slight pinch of pain as Yan Jin gently bit his lip, nibbling, before expelling a hot breath and slowly raising his head.

Under the dim candlelight, Yan Jin’s eyes were very dark, with a hint of obsession within their depths. He looked down at Shen Zhixian and murmured in a low voice, “I couldn’t help it. Sui Xian, I couldn’t help myself.”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 43

Yan Jin’s usual forbearance disappeared and he exhaled a constricted breath.

Shen Zhixian was overwhelmed and muddle-headed. He blurted out, “Couldn’t help what?”

The moment the words left his mouth, Shen Zhixian regretted it immediately. But, the words couldn’t be recovered, and he could only listen as Yan Jin said, “I couldn’t help...wanting to do bad things to Sui Xian.”

Shen Zhixian, who’d just experienced the “bad things,” couldn’t help licking his lips, which seemed to still carry Yan Jin’s residual heat. His throat felt dry and parched, making him unable to speak.

He’d thought of thousands of defenses to prevent Yan Jin from blackening, to prevent Yan Jin from killing him. But, he’d never thought that he might need to prevent Yan Jin from thinking of him.

Who was he now in Yan Jin's eyes? Sui Xian or Master?

If it was Master...Shen Zhixian somehow remembered a trending post he’d seen on a forum in his past life.

—On the ranking of high-risk occupations in ancient pure love fantasy novels.

A group had commented: “Congratulations to the Masters for being pushed to the top of the list.”

.
Shen Zhixian: "....."

It was moments like this that made Shen Zhixian somewhat hate his excellent memory. Despite how long it’d been, he could still vaguely recall the delighted congratulations and the many comments that followed.

“Being too good to the disciple, it’s the Master.”

“Being not good enough to the disciple, causing him to blacken, it’s also the Master.”

“To whom the disciple owed a debt to, whether good or bad, also still the Master.

Shen Zhixian: "....."

Shen Zhixian forcibly suppressed his memories of the derailing comments, and thought of Sui Xian again.

Not himself, but Yan Jin’s “Sui Xian.”

He had embraced Yan Jin in his childhood, had coaxed him and treated him well, so well that Yan Jin still remembered this “Sui Xian.”

Was Yan Jin really thinking of him, or did he like him because of this “Sui Xian?”

Or maybe it was simply...

Shen Zhixian was in a complex mood and was lost in thought for a while.

Seeing that he wasn’t speaking, that his face had an indiscernible expression, and that the faint coldness that Shen Zhixian had always emitted while within the grounds of Qingyun Sect had reappeared, Yan Jin’s eyes dimmed. He released Shen Zhixian, turned over, and stood next to the bed. His voice was both tight and bitter as he said, “The disciple

overstepped. Master, please have a good rest. I…”

Now, whenever Shen Zhixian heard the word “Master” from Yan Jin's mouth, his heart would feel constricted and chilled. He regained his senses, stammering to answer while he tried to sit up.

But his mind was stretched taut and the wine hadn’t completely dissipated from his body. When he tried to sit up, he couldn’t help but fall over slightly. Yan Jin instantly reached out to steady him.

The moment Yan Jin's hand wrapped around Shen Zhixian’s wrist, Shen Zhixian suddenly felt a trace of nervousness and apprehension, flashing by so fast that he could hardly follow it.

Hold on!

--This wasn’t his emotion!

That feeling came again.

Shen Zhixian brows furrowed slightly. Although he was shocked that Yan Jin had such an idea about him, he was only shocked. At best, it was a little hard to believe. There was nothing to be nervous about and nothing to make him feel apprehensive--so where did these emotions suddenly came from?

Shen Zhixian felt that he was nearly upon the truth. He used spiritual energy to explore the contract buried deep within his spiritual sea and, sure enough, that kind of nervousness and apprehension appeared again.

Just then, Yan Jin saw that he was sitting upright and released him, causing the emotions to fade.

As Yan Jin was retracting his hand, Shen Zhixian reached out to capture it. He raised his gaze up to look at Yan Jin and asked lightly, “What are you afraid of?”

Yan Jin stared at him, his hand in Shen Zhixian’s grasp suddenly tensing.

--It was Yan Jin who was nervous and apprehensive.

This contract was related to Yan Jin's emotions?

Or rather, the contract allowed him to sense Yan Jin’s inner voice?

Shen Zhixian remembered the words that he’d vaguely heard several times before and, combined with Yan Jin’s recent performance, he became more and more certain that his guess was correct.

He suddenly felt that it was a little interesting, causing his lips to curve into a slight smile.

Shen Zhixian was such a person. He may worry about something before it happens. But, once it happened, he was the one who was most open to it. Now, the more nervous Yan Jin was, the less nervous he became. It even made him want to tease Yan Jin a little.

He purposefully prevented his smile from widening and quietly said, “You called me Master, but you did such an outrageous thing and didn’t even give one or two reasons why. You wanted to run instead. Sit down and talk.”

Shen Zhixian exerted a little force, and Yan Jin could only sit down beside him, his back straight, his abdomen tight. He sat in an incredibly proper posture, as if he was in an early morning class in Qingyun Sect, all respectful and silent.

“Hmm?” Shen Zhixian saw that Yan Jin’s lips were tight and his face was very serious, not saying a word. Shen Zhixian wanted to force him to reveal what’s inside his heart, and pretending to be helpless, he said, “Forget it. If you don’t want to say it, then just forget it. Tonight, I was drunk, and I won’t remember anything…”

“You might have been momentarily confused and that was why you did such a disgraceful thing. After tonight, it won’t be counted…”

Before he'd even finished speaking, Yan Jin interrupted in a firm voice, "Master."

He abruptly stood and swiftly moved over to kneel on one knee in front of Shen Zhixian, reminding him of that time in the secret realm when Yan Jin had kneeled in front of the merman to beg for the inverse scale, for him.

...It was the same now, with absolutely no hesitation.

"Sui Xian…" This time, Yan Jin no longer called Shen Zhixian master. After a long pause, he said, "Don't forget it, don't not count it…"

He was on one knee in front of Shen Zhixian, speaking with extreme difficulties. With just these few words, his emotions were clearly filled with a little nervousness, a little forbearance, a strong determination, and a blend of desperation and despair.

All kinds of emotions were mixed and interwoven, passing to Shen Zhixian through the contract. It made Shen Zhixian's heart feel choked, so panicked that he didn't know what to do.

"I wasn't momentarily confused. I've yearned for it for a long time. Sui Xian, can I do this to you...these disgraceful things?"

Yan Jin looked down and took Shen Zhixian's hand with both of his hands. Then, he lowered his head and placed on the back of his hand a reverent kiss.

Yan Jin's lips were hot, and the moment they touched the back of Shen Zhixian's cold hand, he felt as if he was severely scalded, the heat shooting straight into his heart.

His fingers curled slightly, wanting to shrink back instinctively. But his hand was too tightly grasped.

Yan Jin looked up at him, his eyes completely serious and full of hope and

expectations.

Shen Zhixian opened his mouth but found that he couldn’t say anything.

He should have refused, but his throat seemed to be locked and he could not spit out any rejections. He turned his head slightly, his cheeks burning hot as he tried to cover up his own unnaturalness.

Seeing that Shen Zhixian wasn’t speaking but also wasn’t coldly rejecting him, Yan Jin’s face slightly relaxed. This, combined with the fact that Shen Zhixian wasn’t angry, Yan Jin breathe a little sigh of relief and quietly interlocked their fingers.

Shen Zhixian’s fingers moved slightly, but he still didn’t refuse. Therefore, Yan Jin, who won an inch but still wanted to take a foot, moved forward to embrace Shen Zhixian. He buried his head in Shen Zhixian’s neck and slightly rubbed his head against the soft skin there, his small action displaying a sense of being spoiled. “Sui Xian…”

He seemed so happy, brimming with such joy that Shen Zhixian could feel it. Unable to bear it anymore, Yan Jin asked, “Sui Xian hadn’t spoken yet. Do you agree?”

Then, Yan Jin swallowed, and he recited the words in a straightforward way, “Sui Xian, I want to stay with you forever. I want to fold the new spring willow for you and listen with you to the night cicadas sing. I want to enjoy a cup of wine with you and view the Autumn chrysanthemums together. In the late Winter season, I can hold you under the cover, share a pillow with you, and dream together with you.”

He once again rubbed his head against Shen Zhixian’s neck. Shen Zhixian could feel his hot breath brushing against his throat, such that he couldn’t help but shiver at little at the sensation. Yan Jin whispered, “Sui Xian, can I?”

Shen Zhixian: “....”

Shen Zhixian: "???"

Seeing Yan Jin act spoiled for the first time, Shen Zhixian felt as if his head had gone stupid. He almost couldn’t prevent his heart from trembling at these cheesy pickup lines. But, he kept calm with some difficulties and pushed Yan Jin back a little, asking with a complicated expression, “Where did you learn this nonsense?”

—After listening, why were they so familiar?!

Yan Jin allowed himself to be pushed away. After a moment of silence, he honestly explained with an innocent expression, “In the book…”

Shen Zhixian: "!!!!!!"

In the book?

Wait a minute!

That day!

Finally, solved!

Understanding jolted through him, and Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered the book that had disappeared for a long time. “You took my book?”

Yan Jin stared attentively at him and his lips faintly trembled as he pressed down the thoughts in his heart. “Mmn,” he said. Then, he carefully asked, “I saw Sui Xian reading it. You also don’t dislike it, right?”

A mouthful of blood rushed up Shen Zhixian’s throat and he swallowed it back down with difficulty--So, Yan Jin, this low-EQ person, his brain was stirred askew by this thing. Or did it strike the first spark in Yan Jin’s mind?!!

This was really...Shen Zhixian took a deep breath, and then slowly exhaled. He helplessly said, “These words can’t be counted…”

“It counted,” Yan Jin quickly interrupted. Then, he seriously and solemnly said, “Sui Xian is willing to hold hands with me. Sui Xian is willing to be held by me. Sui Xian always protects and tolerates me. Even when I have offended, Sui Xian would not get angry…”

He added quietly, “The book said, this is because Sui Xian also likes me. I think this should be counted as valid.”

Shen Zhixian: “ ... ”

He wanted to immediately catch the foolish disciple that had written these groundless books and send him to plant melons. Plant melons for a year! No! Plant melons for three years!

Shen Zhixian was silent for a long time before he finally sighed helplessly. Using the hand that wasn’t held, he rubbed the space between his eyebrows until he was completely calmed. “A’jin, you’re a little drunk tonight. I’m afraid you’re a little drunk and a little confused. I can be your teacher, and I can be your brother. Only, this matter…”

He spoke like he was coaxing a child. “I hope you can think it over again. This isn’t a trivial matter that you can quickly make a decision on. I don’t want you to make an abrupt decision based on these books or on someone else and then regret it later.”

Yan Jin looked at him in a daze for a long time. Then his eyelashes faintly trembled, and he carefully said, “I won’t regret it. I’ve already carefully thought it through. Sui Xian, can I?”

In the dim candlelight, Yan Jin's eyes gleamed brightly, with only Shen Zhixian’s image reflected within their depths. He looked at Shen Zhixian as if he was looking at a treasured person who belonged to him only. He murmured, “It’s not because of the books nor due to anyone else…”

Yan Jin’s hand trembled slightly and, because he held Shen Zhixian’s hand so tightly, Shen Zhixian’s hand also shook with him.

Shen Zhixian suddenly felt a strange feeling in his heart, as if he’d done something bad and said something wrong, and somehow he felt a sense of guilt.

He forcibly suppressed the weird feeling and saw that Yan Jin's mood seemed a bit wrong. Thinking of Yan Jin's slightly red eyes in the secret realm, Shen Zhixian resolved his heart. He took the initiative to lean forward and hug Yan Jin. Then, he lightly patted him on the back before quickly pulling back.

“Good. I understand. But, this thing is very sudden for me. Would A’jin give me some time to think it over?”

Shen Zhixian's voice was much gentler than the spring breeze in March, soothing Yan Jin’s emotions. He released Shen Zhixian's hand and instead held Shen Zhixian's whole body in his arms. Resting his head on Shen Zhixian's shoulder, he moodily muttered a sound of consent.

He was slightly taller than Shen Zhixian and can easily embrace Shen Zhixian in his arms. Their two bodies were a good fit, as if they were born to embrace each other.

Shen Zhixian wrapped his arms around Yan Jin, feeling his hot chest and listening to his strong heartbeat. Shen Zhixian closed his eyes, suddenly feeling as if he’d eaten a jujube pill.

He’d always thought that he was cooking Yan Jin in warm water, scheming to turn a reborn Yan Jin full of killing intent into a good disciple. But, he didn’t expect that, in the end, he was the frog cooked by Yan Jin.

Yan Jin quietly occupied every corner of his life.

The first person he saw every day was Yan Jin. The first person he spoke to was Yan Jin. When Yan Jin was angry, he instantly wanted to coax him. When Yan Jin was sad, he felt worried. He couldn’t bear to see Yan Jin feel aggrieved, and he would also feel aggrieved with Yan Jin.

He tried very hard to persuade himself that this was the normal attitude that a master would have toward his disciple. His care and concern for Yan Jin was completely normal.

But then, after Yan Jin had mentioned that sentence, all kinds of scenes from the books came to his mind.

He recalled the contents of the books little by little and, for the first time, put himself and Yan Jin inside the story.

Then, he discovered that the books were actually very harmful.

He was afraid that the words within the books might cause trouble, after all.

Xixi: I found this scene to be sweet and romantic and funny. Shen Zhixian's reaction was both very realistic yet open-minded, even though he was slowly and obliviously being bent by Yan Jin.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 44

Shen Zhixian couldn’t remember when they finally fell asleep. He only remembered that Yan Jin embraced him for a long time, until the wine that had been temporarily suppressed surged back up.

“Let’s sleep.” He patted Yan Jin's back.

Yan Jin let go of him and stuffed him into the bed. Then he paused and stuffed himself in also.

Shen Zhixian wanted to say something, but after thinking about it, he still didn't say it. He just moved aside to give him some space, dividing the bed into half for each of them.

The bed wasn’t small, and the comforter was quite large. They ended up lying on their backs, with more than half a person in between.

Neither of them spoke, leaving only the sound of faint breathing.

After a long while, the comforter moved slightly. Yan Jin stretched his hand out, and accurately placed it over Shen Zhixian's hand.

Carefully and tentatively, he gently rested his hand on Shen Zhixian's hand. And, it was only after seeing that there was no response did his fingers curled in slightly.

Shen Zhixian kept his eyes closed, thinking that Yan Jin wasn’t being too excessive. He pretended not to know, allowing Yan Jin to hold his hand, even as he sighed in his heart.

As a result, when he woke up the next day, Shen Zhixian found that their postures were not good.

He thought about a lot of things last night, about Yan Jin, Qingyun Sect, the original book, and himself. After thinking about it for a long time, he fell asleep. Therefore, he didn't know how it'd morphed from holding hands to…

Anyway, when he woke up, Shen Zhixian looked at the chest right in front of his face. He froze mid-yawned, dumbfounded.

Yan Jin was already awake, watching him. Shen Zhixian immediately knew why he'd felt like he was being warmed by a torch while in his sleep.

Shen Zhixian silently tried to extricate himself, only to discover that he'd turned Yan Jin's arm into a pillow. Meanwhile, Yan Jin's other hand rested intimately and comfortably on his waist.

He carefully removed his hand, which happened to also be resting on Yan Jin's waist. It was no wonder that this sleep was so comfortable and warm. It turned out that he was wrapped in Yan Jin's embrace.

"Good morning," Shen Zhixian said, his voice slightly hoarse from sleep. He pulled back, motioning for Yan Jin to take his hand off his waist. "What time is it?"

Yan Jin reported that it was not too early, nor too late. "Does Sui Xian want to sleep in for a while?"

Shen Zhixian shook his head slightly, with a hint of drunkenness and tiredness in his eyes. "I want to bathe."

Even if most of the wine he'd drank the night before had dissipated by a lot, he still felt uncomfortable.

Yan Jin half-embraced and half-carried him as he helped him to his feet.

When Shen Zhixian thought he was going to let go, Yan Jin tilted his head and brushed his lips over Shen Zhixian’s mouth, leaving behind a quick, hot kiss. "Sui Xian, good morning. "

At first, Shen Zhixian instinctively moved his head to avoid him, then paused at the last moment, allowing their lips to meet and brushed. Then, he frowned at him. “Why are you doing this so early in the morning?”

Yan Jin said innocently. “The book says...this is the way to say hello to Sui Xian. "

Shen Zhixian: " ... "

He patted the back of Yan Jin's hand neither too lightly nor too heavily and said, "It's okay to read these books less. All right. Take the book out and give it back.”

Yan Jin hesitated, feeling reluctant. But, he saw Shen Zhixian’s slightly narrowed eyes and obediently dug through his storage bag and pulled out the book.

Once the book was in his hand, Shen Zhixian casually glanced at the book and suddenly became stunned. When he’d bought the book, it was still very brand new. But now, the cover was dog-eared and the pages looked as if they’d been read many times. Who knew how many times Yan Jin had sneakily read the book.

Yan Jin asked in a low voice, “There should be several other volumes. Can I read them?”

He still kept thinking about the book.

Shen Zhixian shot him an unhappy glance and resolutely refused. “You may not. Can you fetch some water for me? I want to take a bath.”

After Yan Jin obediently left to fetch water for him, Shen Zhixian leaned against the side of the bed and looked at the book for a long time, showing a

helpless smile, before finally putting it into his storage bag.

Fortunately, this book was only the first volume, and the content of the first volume wasn't too... full of things that might be a bad influence.

After bathing, Shen Zhixian left the room, feeling lively and refreshed. He saw Duan Yuan humming in the yard and cleaning up last night's mess. When Duan Yuan saw him, he looked at him carefully, a little dazed, before finally greeting, "Good morning, Big Brother Sui."

This morning, when Duan Yuan woke up sober, he realized how stupid he was last night. He wanted to confess his identity to Shen Zhixian, but he didn't want to confess like that! And, he remembered that he'd done something offensive to the big brother.

"Big Brother Sui, I'm sorry about last night…" He apologized and scratched his head. "I did a bad thing last night…"

Duan Yuan was still dressed as a young man, without any intentional disguise. He was so full of youth and vigor that, when Shen Shixian heard the words "bad thing," he thought of Yan Jin. He couldn't help remembering the things that Yan Jin said last night and immediately interrupted Duan Yuan. "It doesn't matter. You…"

As he was speaking, Yan Jin came through the door. As he entered, a fragrant smell drifted over, immediately attracting the attention of the two hungover and hungry people.

Yan Jin silently pulled the food he bought, most of which were dishes Shen Zhixian liked to eat, and put them in front of him one by one. As for Duan Yuan...well, he wasn't considered at all.

Shen Zhixian glanced at Duan Yuan quietly, put the food down, and invited him over to eat.

Seeing that Shen Zhixian's attitude toward him was still the same, Duan Yuan's heart finally felt at ease. The smile on his face reappeared, and he

hurried over to join them for breakfast.

Chatting at the table was a Chinese traditional virtue. Shen Zhixian swallowed the bun in his mouth and asked, "Are you going to assume your male identity later? You haven't reached the age of twenty..."

After last night’s unexpected incident, he’d thoroughly given up on playing matchmaker between Yan Jin and Duan Yuan. The original garbage of a book was so vague that it didn’t even mention that Duan Yuan was a boy! It was no wonder that, in the late stages of the book, the drama was so strange. Duan Yuan was obviously following Yan Jin, but there was no ambiguous drama at all.

After a moment of silence, Duan Yuan raised his lips in a smile. “Forget it! I’ve thought about it, and it’s a disaster anyway. It’s really sad to pretend to be a girl. I’ve decided to follow my heart and just be myself.”

After making this decision, it was as if a weight had been lifted off him. His expression was relieved as he said, “Master knows my situation and won’t force me to stay in the sect. I can travel around...My master is really good.”

Shen Zhixian saw that he was determined, and he nodded with a smile. "That’s good. But, it can be dangerous outside. You need to be careful…

He trailed off halfway when he suddenly looked down and saw that Yan Jin was in the middle of dropping a big, plump, stuffed steamed bun into his bowl.

He and Yan Jin were sitting close together so, when the bun fell into his bowl, he heard Yan Jin whisper to him, “My master is also very good.”

Yan Jin’s tone couldn’t hide his joy. In fact, Shen Zhixian felt that Yan Jin had been in a happy mood since this morning. Although he looked calm and silent on the surface, Shen Zhixian knew that he was happy.

Yan Jin was still so happy even though Shen Zhixian hadn’t promised anything yet?

Shen Zhixian brought the big steamed bun up to his mouth and bit into it. He chewed slowly, his mood complicated. But, before he'd even finished half of the bun, Yan Jin dropped another into his bowl again.

This was his favorite, but...

"I can't eat this much. Stop giving me more!" Shen Zhixian whispered. "You eat your own. Don't give me anymore…"

He discovered that Yan Jin liked to feed him very much. His bowl was stuffed full, and it was the same even before his identity was revealed. But, his appetite had always been small, and it was easy for him to become full every time.

Yan Jin whispered back to him, "Master is too thin. Fourth Elder said that you should eat more."

For some reason, Shen Zhixian instinctively felt that the Fourth Elder was simply shouldering the pot for Yan Jin.

He moved his bowl away into a position that would prevent Yan Jin from putting anything else in it.

Duan Yuan ate and ate and began to feel wronged. After Shen Zhixian stopped speaking, Duan Yuan also stopped speaking and focused on obediently eating. But, he soon found that the two people on the opposite side of the table were speaking privately to each other, talking in low whispers. Continuously talking!

He looked on sadly. "Big Brother Sui, am I out of favor?...Big Brother Yan, you've changed. You haven't been like this before and haven't spoken so much before…"

Shen Zhixian turned back and saw that the youth looked lost. With a smile, he shoved a large steamed bun in front of him. "Big Brother Yan said that this bun is delicious so you should eat more!"

The youth looked at him suspiciously, but Shen Zhixian maintained an innocent expression. The depressed youth then looked at Yan Jin, who looked calm and perfectly unreadable. Finally, Duan Yuan’s chopsticks took the last large, stuffed steamed bun. He took a large bite, filling his cheeks like a hamster.

The happier you feeling when getting along with someone, the more sad you’ll feel when separation came.

Duan Yan reluctantly said goodbye to them, and turned back three times.

Shen Zhixian waved at him. "Don't look back. Watch the road ahead and take good care. Take care."

Duan Yuan cupped his hand in respect and finally strode forward, no longer looking back. The sun was shining on his back, making it look cool and heroic and revealing a youthful pride and vigor.

Shen Zhixian watched him leave with a smile, and when he couldn’t see his figure anymore, he sighed. "It's good to be young."

He’d been in such a spirited age. So had the original body.

It was an age of curiosity, of taking risks, and experiencing the world to gain experience and wisdom.

After separating from Duan Yuan, they went on the flying fish. The flying fish hadn’t been brought out in a long time. Every day, it stayed in the water ball and spit out bubbles in grievance. Finally, it couldn’t wait any longer. As soon as it was released, it immediately rushed to the sky with the two people on its back.

As usual, Yan Jin set up a transparent barrier, blocking out the scorching sun and the wind.

After flying for a while, Yan Jin suddenly asked about Shen Zhixian’s

childhood experience.

This was regarding the original Shen Zhixian's body. Even though the original Shen Zhixian in the book did a lot of bad things later, Shen Zhixian still didn't want to intrude on every private things that the original Shen Zhixian had experienced. He vaguely said, "It's been too long. I'd forgotten many things."

Then, he asked Yan Jin in turn, saying casually, "What about the person who used to be good to you?"

Shen Zhixian wanted to gloss over his own affair while trying to sound Yan Jin out. After listening to him, Yan Jin smiled in understanding.

In fact, in the secret realm, he'd been stimulated by Yin Ci's spirit pellet, which actually restored some of his memories. He knew that he wasn't originally reborn after having his spirit root severed. After his spirit root was severed in the previous life, he still lived and then a lot of things happened…

Yan Jin had been thinking a lot, and he vaguely noticed that, for a period of time, Shen Zhixian was acting odd, but he still couldn't figure out what was going on.

What happened to Shen Zhixuan from the previous life?

Was that oddness related to his heart ailment?

His heart ailment….What had caused it?

At that time, to Shen Zhixian….What exactly happened?

Even though numerous doubts lingered in his mind, Yan Jin's eyebrows relaxed. He looked down at Shen Zhixian and quietly said, "He should be fine now."

Shen Zhixian pursed his lips, wanting to ask more about what had

happened. The original book only focused on the direct suffering that Yan Jin had received within Qingyun Sect and only vaguely referenced his past prior to entering the sect. The general idea was that he had a difficult time. But, regarding how difficult it was, the book did not mention in detail.

But, asking about this difficult past only seemed to make Yan Jin remember it, and Shen Zhixian couldn't bear for him to relive those memories. He could only shut his mouth and endure the uncomfortable feeling in his heart as he tried with difficulties to ignore this opportunity.

Yan Jin noticed that Shen Zhixian no longer spoke and no longer mentioned it. After a moment, he shifted closer to Shen Zhixia's side. "Sui Xian, can I...hug you?"

Yan Jin seemed to like hugging. When Shen Zhixian had been cold that night, Yan Jin had asked him if he wanted a hug. When he could no longer walk in the secret realm, Yan Jin had asked the same thing. Now, even while sitting on a flying fish, he asked again.

Shen Zhixian sat properly, looking straight ahead. He began to refuse, "Under broad daylight, it's not good to hug so intimately. It's not proper decorum…"

Before he'd even finished speaking, Yan Jin had already hugged him from behind. With his chin resting on Shen Zhixian's shoulder, he smiled softly. His breath became puffs of warm air that brushed across Shen Zhixian's cheeks, making them flush hotly.

"Ah-hem. But, since there is no one in the air…" He couldn't speak anymore and let out another light cough to conceal his discomfort. But he continued to maintain his calm expression, as if nothing had happened.

But gradually, his straight back slowly relaxed.

Elation flashed across Yan Jin's eyes, impossible to hide.

.....

After getting the scale, the side-effects of the heart ailment had eased. For the time being, there was no risk of death, and Shen Zhixian was able to relax his vigilance.

During this time, they walked slowly along the way, inquiring about the location of the Undead City. They traveled quite leisurely, not as if they were trying to gain experience but more like they were sight-seeing.

The relationship between them was also constantly fermenting.

In the end, Shen Zhixian transmigrated into the book. His thinking was not as restrictive as the people in this world. At the same time, he also wasn't exactly tenacious in maintaining his heterosexuality, and so he was very open to those things between men. He also didn't feel too much angst regarding upending the ethical hierarchy between master and disciple.

Since Yan Jin had such thoughts about him, then...so be it.

Shen Zhixian's thoughts were actually very simple. Yan Jin was good to him, and he also wanted to be good to Yan Jin. If, in the future…

If they both found that they don't match well together, then they can harmoniously agree to separate. In this way, they can both be happy.

Recently, the flying fish had been flying over various prosperous towns and cities. On this day, it reached a city along the river and landed at the outskirts.

Shen Zhixian put the flying fish away and slowly walked through the city gate with Yan Jin. On the large wooden plaque were two words written in bold calligraphy.

Yangzhou.

This Yangzhou immediately reminded Shen Zhixian of the poem "March Fireworks Over Yangzhou." This reminder moved him, and he decided to

rest here.

This city was worthy of sharing the same name as the famous and prosperous city in history. This Yanzhou was also loud and flourishing. Along the river, there were many decorated pleasure boats, and all kinds of people came and went. It bustled with activities, very lively.

It was nearly dark by then. Shen Zhixian took Yan Jin walking along the river, and he suddenly turned back to smile at him. “A’jin is used to engaging in cultivation. It must be rare for you to see such a bustling scene. Tonight, Master will take you along to gain some first-hand experience.”

He pointed toward the river, at a brightly decorated and lively pleasure boat.

Xixi: There may be some inconsistencies in vocabs and in maintaining some Chinese pinyin while translating others. I'll probably go back to re-edit for consistency. While I quite enjoy reading Xianxia, my understanding of the genre isn't very deep. Thank goodness this novel isn't full of cultivation jargon or I probably wouldn't be brave enough to pick it up.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 45

The pleasure boats were brightly lit, thrumming with the melodic sound of reed pipes. People came and went, filling the boats with activities and displaying every and all kinds of postures.

Abroad the luxurious and exquisitely decorated pleasure boats, dainty figures with rouged cheeks and painted make-ups called out in delicate voices to customers. The wind playfully teased their pleated skirts embroidered with flowers and butterflies, provoking raised heads and increased heartbeats.

“Let’s stop here.” Shen Zhixian’s attitude was carelessly lazy as he raised one foot toward the stand that led to one of the pleasure boats. He pulled out his folding fan and snapped it open, then waved it lazily toward his face. As an elegant gongzi, no matter how intensely hot or bitterly cold the temperature, he ought to have a folding fan in his hand. This was integral to portraying the image of elegance and distinction.

Yan Jin’s pursed his lips and followed behind him without a word, his gaze fixed on Shen Zhixian and no one else.

“Come...arrange a private room for this gongzi. Find some exquisite beauties to pour wine and some to sing and dance.” When the original Shen Zhixian was young and came out to practice, he came upon this place by chance. Shen Zhixian followed the memory, and while walking with familiarity, he instructed the servant waiting upon them.

Then, he casually pulled out several silver pieces and a silver banknote.

The servant looked at the money several times, quietly glanced at the amount on the silver banknote, and burst with joy. Beaming widely, she immediately led the way. “Two gongzi, please come…”

Shen Zhixian slightly paused half a step and waited until Yan Jin came up next to him. He pulled Yan Jin’s sleeve and gestured for him to look at the opposite pleasure boat, whispering, “See those rows of beautiful flower lanterns?”

Yan Jin glanced over, then withdrew his gaze, not saying a single word.

“This pleasure boat doesn’t have hanging lanterns, meaning it only sells art and not sexual favors,” Shen Zhixian explained. “But, that pleasure boat over there has hanging lanterns so it sells everything--When you come, don’t enter the wrong place.”
Yan Jin had tolerated and endured, tolerated and endured. But, in the end, he couldn’t hold back and said in a low voice, “Sui Xian seemed to be very familiar with this place.”

Shen Zhixian only let out an “oh” sound and, pretending not to understand his implication, smilingly pulled him into the private room that the servant had arranged for them.

The private room was very elegantly arranged, carrying a faint scent of incense. Shen Zhixian picked a seat to sit down and, seeing that Yan Jin was coming over to sit next to him, he quickly raised his hand to stop him. “Go and sit on the opposite side.”

Yan Jin paused and reluctantly sat down on the opposite chair.

The door creaked open, and ten graceful, lotus-like girls leisurely entered. The first four were empty-handed and soon divided into two to stand on either side of Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin, intending to pour wine and rub their shoulders to relax them. The rest of the women were in dance clothes and soon the dancers were positioned on the open space. They began to dance softly, creating a scene of beautiful extravagance.

Shen Zhixian had a casual and carefree smile on his face as he waved his hand to signal that the two girls should just pour wine.

He quietly glanced at Yan Jin.

Yan Jin’s mouth tightened as he silently watched the girl begin to pour wine.

This wasn’t the girl’s first time serving such a serious guest. After all, she’d poured wine and fed people hundreds of times before. With a soft voice, she teased, “This gongzi’s face is so cold. It’s quite unsatisfactory. You’re not giving me face.”

The other girl reached out with slender, nimble fingers to message his arm.

Yan Jin abruptly jerked up to his feet. His action caused him to bump into the two girls, who broke apart a few steps. They saw his furious expression. “Gongzi…”

Shen Zhixian said in a timely manner, "Don't like these young women? Then substitute. "

The two girls answered with some grievance and retreated. After a while, two young men with red lips and white teeth entered, replacing them.

The two youths were about sixteen to seventeen years old. The two girls who’d previously stepped down had thought that Yan Jin probably didn’t like attendants with heavy makeup and called for these two good-looking youths to replace them.

But, Yan Jin still had a cold face, his expression looking more and more grim. He sat properly and stiffly in his seat, staring at the wine on the table and barely blinking.

The two youths looked at each other, then leaned toward him. As their hands reached out to touch Yan Jin’s neck, Shen Shixian, who was slowly sipping his wine, suddenly said, “Just pour the wine. Don’t do anything

else.”

Two youths: “.....”

They retracted their hands and glanced at the girls standing quietly behind Shen Zhixian

—No service, just stand silly like this?

The girl holding the wine jug saw that Shen Zhixian's cup was empty and, with a gentle smile, poured him another cup of wine. Then she straightened and looked back at the two youths.

—If the guests won’t let you touch, then stand stupidly.

Actually, they were very clear on this. If the guests won’t even allow them to provide this service, then….it would actually be less troublesome.

The song and dance in front of them had just reached its climax. The dancer turned her skirt, a string of jade beads and bells dangling around her nimble waist. The sound was clear and, when combined with the sound of the zither, made people unable to move their eyes away.

Shen Zhixian looked on with interest, pretending that he couldn’t feel Yan Jin’s gaze on himself. He finished the glass of wine in his hand and raised his hand slightly, not turning his head. “Pour wine.”

The wine jug tilted slightly. But, before even a drop of liquor fell out, Yan Jin suddenly stood and walked over a few steps. Frowning, he took the jug and said stiffly, “I’ll do it. You can go out.”

He filled the cup for Shen Zhixian, who took a sip. Shen Zhixian’s eyelids slightly lowered, and he shook the cup silently.

The young men and the girls looked at each other and then at Shen Zhixian. But, seeing that Shen Zhixian wasn’t speaking or objecting, they bowed and silently walked toward the door.

As they were leaving, Shen Zhixian finally opened his mouth and told the group of musicians and dancers, “You go out too.”

Everyone heard him quite clearly.

The sound of music immediately stopped and the dancers also stopped, skirts and bells still shaking. They all bowed respectfully and, as quiet as they came, quickly left.

The last one closed the door, shutting them alone inside.

"You don't like it?" Shen Zhixian asked softly.

“Sui Xian, do you like it?” Yan Jin sat down beside him and placed the jug on the table.

Shen Zhixian avoided answering this question. He looked down at the wine cup in his hand. The clear liquor was trembling slightly in the cup. Sui Xian. He said, “You’re right. I don’t like them. However, there are so many good things in the world. From now on, you’ll see more places and more people…”

Shen Zhixian smiled and then sighed. When he spoke, his voice sounded faintly disappointed. “...Maybe in the future, you’ll meet people that you’ll like even more.”

Yan Jin seemed to somewhat understand Shen Zhixian’s meaning. His mouth tightened and he stared at Shen Zhixian with hot eyes, not backing down. “But they’re not you….”

Shen Zhixian frowned slightly. He raised his eyes to look at Yan Jin and saw how calm his expression was. But, Shen Zhixian faintly checked the contract and it felt a little…

Aggrieved and sad.

Shen Zhixian gazed at him for a long time. But, suddenly, his heart softened, becoming muddled. Then, he placed the wine cup on the table and leaned forward slightly to pat Yan Jin's hand, which was placed on his knee. "Okay, okay. They're not me…"

At that moment, there came an uproar from outside. Suddenly, a gong rang out, followed quickly by loud applause and voices shouting a name.

It seemed that this pleasure boat's star performer was about to come out.

Since they're both already here, they might as well view the excitement. Shen Zhixian pulled Yan Jin out of the private room.

They were on the second floor of the pleasure boat. This pleasure boat was cleverly designed such that, looking down from the second floor, they could clearly see a panoramic view of the stage on the first floor.

A beautiful woman, slim and graceful with an air of fragility, walked on to the stage, her skirt swaying with every step.

Someone let out a loud whistle. "Tao Hua'er!"

The woman smiled widely and tilted her head. Her voice was soft as a bird. "Tao Hua'er has seen everyone."

As the top beauty in this pleasure boat, she'd always been very popular. People had thrown numbers of gold at her, merely to see her smile. Others had thrown thousands of pounds of gold at her, just to beg for a song.

The musician began a tune, and Tao Hua'er cleared her throat and began to sing.

Her voice was soft and mellow as she sang about young love, when a girl took a walk in spring and fell in love at first sight.

"Walking under the spring sun, apricot flowers drifting overhead, on the raised path was a distinguished and accomplished young man...Take me to

marry and, even if in my life, I become mercilessly abandoned, I won’t regret…”

It was very comfortable hearing this traditional song. Shen Zhixian couldn’t help humming a few words. As he looked at this Tao Hua'er, he suddenly had an inexplicable feeling.

At this moment, Tao Hua’er finished her song and turned around. She raised her eyes gently and cleverly looked up at Shen Zhixian. Red lips slightly curved as she smiled up at him.

Realization dawned and Shen Zhixian immediately turned and buried his face in Yan Jin’s arm, trying to avoid Tao Hua’er’s sight. He drew in a breath, gritting his teeth.

--It’s her!

Yan Jin didn’t know why he suddenly buried his face in his arms and asked in confusion.

Shen Zhixian’s face was still buried in his arms so his voice was vague and unclear. “I’m afraid to see that old person...Let’s go.”

Yan Jin looked down and saw that Yao Hua’er had already turned away and was singing again. He stared down at this female for a long time before listening to Shen Zhixian and leaving.

But, after turning around and taking just a few steps, they were stopped by the young woman from earlier.

“These two gongzi, what’s wrong? Why are you leaving when you’ve just arrived?” The delicate-looking, orchid-like young woman looked angry. “Did we not serve you well?”

“Can the two gongzi stay and have a few more drinks?” The young man with red lips and white teeth said softly and indifferently.

Yan Jin was emitting a cold chill from head to toes. Shen Zhixian disengaged from his arms and found a handful of silver for them. He smiled carelessly, “Yield.”

The girls and young man did not accept the silver and continued to block them, telling them to stay.

With this delay, Shen Zhixian forgot to pay attention to when the soft tunes underneath stopped. Then, the sounds of light footsteps came from the corridor and the people in front of them suddenly disappeared in wisps of smoke.

The elegant and graceful Tao Hua’er walked lightly toward them, her skirt swaying and her eyes curved at the corner as she smiled at Shen Zhixian, really and truly portraying an image of lovely fragility. “Sui Gongzi, I haven’t seen you for a long time.”

Shen Zhixian subconsciously wanted to wave his folding fan. But, when he touched his waist, he realized that he must have left it behind in the room. He could only raise his hand to his lips and acted as if nothing happened. “I’m afraid the young lady has recognized the wrong person. Please yield.”

Tao Hua’er looked at him with a smile but didn’t relent. She only said, “Sui Gongzi is very handsome. How can Tao Hua’er forget? If it wasn’t for Sui Gongzi’s help, Tao Hua’er would have been insulted by that man…”

As she began to speak of old matters, Shen Zhixian was keenly aware that Yan Jin’s hand had tightened around his waist. He sighed helplessly and said anxiously, “You’re a hundred-year-old painted skin monster. If I didn’t help, you would have a hundred ways to escape safely…”

Feeling that his waist was getting a little painful, Shen Zhixian moved quietly and, under the cover of his sleeve, stealthily held Yan Jin’s hand. “Besides, at that time, I was only doing my job and getting rid of evil.”

Tao Hua’er glanced at him, then at Yan Jin. As if she seemed to understand something, the smile on her lips softened and she said in a quiet voice,

“During that time, Sui Gongzi didn’t say goodbye before leaving. Tao Hua’er’s missed him a lot, all the time. Now, we've finally meet with difficulty. Let’s drink a toast and talk about our heartfelt feelings.”

Shen Zhixian: “ ... ”

It was the original owner who was young and inexperienced and had rushed to meet calamity head on. But, why did the poor and helpless him to have to suffer for it now?!!!

Xixi: It seems like Shen Zhixian really feels insecure about the other “Sui Xian.” He probably thought that, if he jumps into the relationship, Yan Jin might leave him if he meets the other “Sui Xian” again.

Gongzi = son of a nobleman/official

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 46.1

It was due to a coincidence that the former Shen Zhixian became acquainted with the painted skin demon.

When he saw her, he was just a young man who had yet to reach the peak of cultivation. He was exactly at the age where he was curious about everything. Moreover, he'd been diligently cultivating within the sect for many years and so it was rare for him to see such a bustling and noisy place. He couldn't help himself and stopped to look around.

It happened that the foot of the city was built along the river and, on the spacious river, there were several exquisite pleasure boats, all brightly lit and some decorated with colorful lanterns and silk ribbons. All kinds of beauties stood by the railing, looking out with charming eyes.

Sui Xian, with a sense of insight, randomly picked a pleasure boat to enter.

At that time, he didn't know too much about it. What he entered was a pleasure boat adorned with lanterns. As soon as he entered, everyone seemed to wrap around him, making it difficult for him to move.

His original appearance was too outstanding so he'd modified it, making it so that, although his appearance hadn't changed much, people would easily overlook him.

Yet, his temperament could not be deliberately hidden. Although ordinary mortals couldn't see through his illusion, they could still sense his noble temperament. As a result, all the girls and young men felt that he was a big guest, and they all came over, trying their best to catch his attention.

Sui Xian was suddenly surrounded by rouged and powdered faces and assailed by strong perfume, making him nearly turn around to leave.

—The reason he didn't leave was because he was attracted by a movement by the window.

At the table next to the window, there were a few richly dressed young men teasing the girl who was there to accompany them. They were not polite and their hands were not honest.

The girl dressed in pink seemed to be trapped in a wolf's den, and there was nowhere for her to move to avoid their paws. The girl frowned slightly and softly rejected them, "Slave only came to sing a song."

Among these gongzi was an elder brother who had drunk too much. He pulled her toward him, dragging her until she fell and ended up sitting on his thigh.

The girl in pink struggled to get away, but she was held tight and unable to move. He said, "Who do you think you are? This old man is here to have fun. I have plenty of money, yet you dare to refuse…"

His two hands fiddled with her body, parting her outer jacket. The girl with the peach blossom face went cold, and then in the next moment, she smiled and asked softly, "Is the guest so insistent?"

This gongzi was not low in status and would usually indulge himself without any restraint. At this moment, he was urged on by several of his companions. His head was hot, and he didn't realize there were any hidden dangers at all. He laughed wildly, "You accompany this old man. This old man—"

Before he'd even finished speaking, he became stunned when tea suddenly splashed across his face. The tea dripped down his forehead, with a few tea leaves affixed to his cheeks.

“Who was it?” The gongzi was furious. The cold tea did not sober him up but was instead like pouring oil on fire, flaming his anger. He shoved the girl in pink aside and angrily stood up. “Who dared pour tea on this old master?!”

At this time, Sui Xian took the opportunity to grab the ribbon of colored silk next to him and tossed it toward the girl. The end of the silk ribbon wrapped around the girl’s wrist, pulling her away from the wolf’s den.

The gongzi saw that it was a handsome youth who was doing these bad things to him. He growled and yelled but, in the next instance, he felt his mouth grow hot. The sounds of his scolding suddenly turned into the quackings of a duck. He grew frightened and touched his mouth in disbelief. He opened his mouth. “Quack, quack, quack, quack!”

The people around him were stunned for a moment, then burst into laughter almost immediately after.

In the midst of this chaos, Sui Xian quietly left with the girl in pink.

There were vacancies everywhere in the pleasure boat, intended to make it convenient for guests who couldn’t help themselves and didn’t want to wait long. Sui Xian pushed open a vacant room at will and, pulling on the colored silk ribbon, tossed the delicate-looking girl into the room.

“Gongzi is so rude.” The girl in pink stood firmly by the table. The silk ribbon wrapped around her hand was not only not taken down but was wrapped even more tightly around her wrist, the ribbon lining her skin like cream. She complained unhappily, “You’ve made this slave’s hand sore.”

Sui Xian closed the door behind him and turned a blind eye to her delicate and aggrieved demeanor. He asked mildly, “What did you want to do to that man?”

The girl in pink was silent for a moment. Then, she covered her mouth, chuckling. Her voice was very delicate as she said, “What can this weak slave girl do?”

Sui Xian shot her a glance and, hearing her light laugh, indifferently touched the sword at his waist. Tied to the sword hilt was a ribbon with a single, white jade. When he touched the sword, the jade knocked against the sword hilt, causing a light sound to rang out. He said, “Although I don’t know what kind of monster you are, if you have a harmful heart, I’ll behead you with this sword.”

The girl stiffened for a moment. Then, her eyes widened and she said innocently, “This slave just saw that he was drunk and upset and just wanted to cool him in the water…”

This was Sui Xian and the painted skin demon’s first encounter.

On the surface, it’d appeared as if he had rescued a girl who was almost bullied. In fact, he’d just saved the life of that rude gongzi brother. At that time, the painted skin demon’s hand had gathered a sinister-looking ball of spiritual power. If Sui Xian had reacted too slowly, that gongzi would really have been thrown into the river.

The memories ended quickly, and Shen Zhixian withdrew from his mind. The weak and delicate-looking Tao Hua’er standing on the other side was like a memory. Even her small and pink mouth was like that year. “Gongzi didn’t say goodbye that year, making this slave quite sad. After gongzi rescued me, I made a promise to myself, not to chase wealth but to only be with the gongzi and spend time grinding tea for him, serving him.”

What a headache….

The young Sui Xian had seen that she was a demon and, worried that she might hurt others, intervened in the incident. But, he’d only drawn trouble to himself.

He stayed in the city for three days, and the painted skin demon entangled him for three days. She’d changed her appearance, her temperament, and even her gender to try to entangle him. In the end, his head was turned around in circles. He couldn’t take it anymore and, on the fourth day, he’d

quietly left the city before dawn.

Unexpectedly, after so many years had passed, Shen Zhixian would see her here again.

The painted skin demon can assume thousands of appearances and can see through many illusions. Therefore, the moment she looked up, Shen Zhixian knew that his simple illusion had been broken.

Tao Hua’er wanted to keep talking, but Shen Zhixian rubbed the space between his eyebrows in an effort to soothe his brewing headache. He said helplessly, “Okay, don’t say it anymore. My little disciple will get angry.”

The cold chill emanating from the little hedgehog next to him was cold enough to freeze. Even his thorns were quietly erect. If the painted skin demon continued to talk, Shen Zhixian had no doubt that she would be pierced by a small hedgehog.

The painted skin demon looked at him, and then looked at Yan Jin. But, she stopped elucidating on the topic. With a smile, she said, "We haven’t seen each other for a long time so it should be recounted. Sui Gongzi and this…” She paused expectantly.

Shen Zhixian only said the word “Yan” and nothing more. The painted skin demon blinked and went with the flow. “Sui Gongzi and Yan Gonzi, let’s return for a chat.”

Shen Zhixian returned helplessly to their private room and sat back down. He picked up the folding fan that he’d left behind and began to play with it.

This time Yan Jin sat next to him, with one arm still resting on his waist, silently proclaiming sovereignty.

Tao Hua’er poured wine for them in a sophisticated and elegant manner.

Shen Zhixian leaned close to Yan Jin's ear and whispered, "Painted skin demons can change into thousands of looks, and is the best at imitating. If

you’re curious, she can change for you to see."

Although he’d lowered his voice, Shen Zhixian was not too guarded against the painted skin demon on the other side. Moreover, this was a monster and not an ordinary person. How could she not hear him whisper?

Tao Hua’er really heard him. She put down the wine jug, and she touched her face with a smile, saying quietly, "Which one does Yan Gongzi like?"

Yan Jin looked down at his wine cup and did not speak.

Tao Hua’er didn't mind his indifference. She stood up, pushed open the door and called for paper and ink. Once the paper was rolled out on the table, she began painting with ease.

She drew very quickly and soon she finished. Putting down her brush, she gathered up the piece of paper.

Shen Zhixian glanced at it, only vaguely seeing a beautiful woman, which was quickly obscured by the mist that suddenly gathered around the painted skin demon.

A painted skin demon changes appearance like an ordinary person changes clothes.
Naturally, it was necessary to cover itself while it did so.

After a while, the mist disappeared, and the weak and delicate Tao Hua’er disappeared, replaced by a graceful and extravagant beauty.

There is a peony flower painted between her brows and a noble smile on her lips. She was full of dignity and was dressed in beautiful clothes full of all the proper etiquette. She calmly said, "Peony has seen the two gongzi. Can this appearance still enter the eyes of the two gongzi? "

Shen Zhixian sipped his wine with a smile. Meanwhile, Yan Jin glanced at her with an expressionless face, unmoved.

The painted skin demon saw that they didn’t respond. She rolled her eyes and brought out a new sheet of paper.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 46.2

There were tens of thousands of beauties. As long as the painted skin demon had a pen and paper, she can imitate the tens of thousands of faces.

Not long after, she changed her appearance to another four or five beautiful faces, each corresponding to a flower name.

Shen Zhixian smiled and slowly drank wine. Yan Jin no longer even bothered looking at her and concentrated on pouring wine for Shen Zhixian instead. When Shen Zhixian’s wine cup was empty, Yan Jin poured another cup for him.

Painted skin demon: "..."

Sui Xian had really good looks but a stone heart. She knew it from many years ago. But, she never expected that his disciple and him would have the same virtue.

The man is worthy of being his disciple. Not fun at all.

She frowned, mumbled to herself for a moment, and then raised her pen again.

This time she turned into a ravishing beauty in a scarlet dress. Her beach blossom eyes were luminous and full of magnificent charm, and her every movements brimmed with seductive grace.

The beautiful woman caressed her face to confirm that it was properly worn. Then, she hooked her lips into a light smile and raised her eyes to see

whether they could resist her.

Her voice seemed to be wrapped in honey, with poison hidden underneath. It can completely captivate a person and seduce him into melting inside her charm. Even if he died, he would not hesitate.

She glanced at Yan Jin with a pair of peach blossom eyes and tried to tempt him. "Yan Gongzi is so boring and uninteresting. Although my face can not be counted as the best under heaven, it can still be regarded as remarkably beautiful. Yan Gongzi is so cold-hearted and hopeless. Won't you even give me a look? "

Such a puzzling person. After so many years, the painted skin demon had only seen two people who could resist her. Yan Jin was the second person and the first was the young Shen Zhixian.

The painted skin demon pondered for a while and thought that maybe Yan Jin still hadn't understood romance yet so he could not be enlightened. If Yan Jin could understand, maybe he would be more aware of the happiness that could be had…

She took tiny lotus steps and came over with her skirt swaying. She leaned next to Yan Jin and said, "Although my pleasure boat is not as lively as the opposite ones, it can still be considered as having an understanding of romance. These things are quite interesting. Why don't Yan Gongzi take a look?"

She flipped her wrists, and a stack of thin booklets appeared in her hands. She shook it and a booklet opened to a page. The things painted on it spread out with a little bit of light, floating in the air and gradually condensed into an illusion. There were ambiguous sounds coming from the moving pictures.

Yan Jin finally had some reactions. He looked at the images with suspicion. But, before he'd even had the chance to take a closer look at those people, Shen Zhixian poured a cup of wine on the pictures.

"...Don't lead my disciple astray. A’jin, don't look at these messy things."

The painted skin demon let out a sound of surprise. "Sui Gongzi saw so much in the past. Why now ..."

"I ..." Shen Zhixian barely opened his mouth before Yan Jin tilted his head to look at him, his eyes clear.

Shen Zhixian's denial burst out like flowing water: "That wasn’t me. I haven’t. Don’t talk any nonsense--”

The painted skin demon covered her mouth with a light laugh and turned her gaze over to him. She’d finally caught on to Shen Zhixian’s weakness. The more he took care, the more she would use these words to tease Yan Jin.

She’d long been adapt to these romantic matters and had seen all kinds of people in the world. What made Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin act so high and mighty? In the matter of romance, the two of them were like a piece of white paper, pure and flawless. The painted skin demon could understand this with a glance.

The painted skin demon was leaning too close to Yan Jin. Shen Zhixian saw that she was scheming up something. He frowned and raised his hand to prevent her from touching Yan Jin. After bearing with it for the third time, he couldn’t take it anymore. He motioned toward Yan Jin’s sword on the table and said in a cold voice, “If you continue to act impetuous, I will draw a sword.”

The beautiful girl paused and looked at the sword for a moment. Then she took a few calm, elegant steps back and returned to her original position.

She was a demon who clearly understood her position. Currently, she was still just a weak painted skin demon. Although she had the ability to change her appearance, her combat ability….was still far below these irritable sword cultivators.

Shen Zhixian saw that she finally put some distance between herself and Yan Jin. He let out a sigh of relief and subconscious pulled on Yan Jin’s sleeve. He sat up a little straighter and said, “Although this is a prosperous place, it still isn’t as good as that other place. Why did you run here?”

She laughed. “This demon is getting old and can’t keep up with that lively place anymore. I need a small place to enjoy my old age...and also to avoid provoking things that shouldn’t be provoked.”

Shen Zhixian’s thoughts spun. The thing she couldn't provoke probably wasn't human. Although the painted skin demon was a monster with weak fighting abilities, it wasn’t so weak as to render her unable to protect herself from ordinary humans.

He asked a question regarding the matter, and the painted skin demon didn’t bother hiding it. “Soon after you left, an envoy came from the Undead City and tried to persuade me to enter there…”

Her smile thinned slightly, showing a faint irony. “What is the Undead City? I definitely won’t enter it…”

--Undead City.

Noticing that Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were staring at her, she asked, “What’s wrong?”

When Shen Zhixian was about to respond, a sudden commotion came from outside. It was the sound of a porcelain cup being shattered, followed by faint voices arguing.

The painted skin demon’s eyebrows slightly rose. Without speaking, she got up and said “How unmannerly.” Then, she pushed open the door and stepped out.

With the door open, the noises became clearer. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin looked at each other and followed after her.

It was the wife of a gongzi. Bringing along two maids and four servants, she came to the pleasure boat to find her prodigal husband who was unwilling to return home.

The dignified and elegant lady crossed her hands gracefully in front of her, calmly staring at the embarrassed man before her. "Husband has been here for a few days. Can he come home?”

"Why are you here to make noise again?!" The elegant-looking man asked. He stood up from the pile of shattered porcelain. He said angrily, "What are you doing here again?"

After saying this, he ignored his wife and turned to apologize to the startled pleasure girl next to him. “These damaged things, I will doubly compensate them…”

The pleasure girl looked at him with a pair of clever eyes and then she looked at the noble lady who was coldly gazing at them. She smiled slightly and silently picked up her lute and walked elegantly to the side.

This scene was not small and had caused the music and dancing on the stage to stop. The dancers stepped down to softly sooth the other surprised guests.

Feeling all kinds of staring eyes on him, the man’s face burned and he said in annoyance, “I came here to enjoy the entertainment and a few drinks. You’ve come here several times already to make trouble. Do you want me to lose face?”

His tone was full of resentment, but the noble lady’s face was indifferent. She lifted her hand to stroke the sleeve of his garment and flatly said, “Husband had already lingered here for several days without returning. I’m already your wife. Is it strange for me to come looking for you?”

As the two people continued to talk downstairs, the painted skin demon leaned against the railing to look at them. Suddenly, she said, “A person from the Undead City?”

It was strange to hear this name so soon twice in a row. Shen Zhixian walked over to the railing and looked at the scene below. “Who?”

This was not a secret that could not be said. The painted skin demon quickly answered. “That lady. See her wrist?”

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin stared intently, and when the lady moved, it caused her sleeve to fall back slightly and reveal half her wrist. With their excellent eyesight, they could see that there was a mark on her wrist.

It was a small white flower partially bloomed. She Zhixian had never seen this kind of flower before and couldn’t name it. But, he instinctively thought that if the flower bloomed, it would be very beautiful.

"What flower is that?" Shen Zhixian asked in a low voice.

"It is said that there is a sea of flowers outside the Undead City. That flower blooms only on the full moon at night. Under the moonlight, the sea of blooming flowers was a magnificent sight," the painted skin demon said slowly. "That flower is called Wang Gui (Forgetting to Return). Everyone who enters the Undead City has this mark. "

Shen Zhixian had never heard of the Undead City before these recent events, and it was the first time he’d heard of the flower named Wang Gui. As a result, he had no immediate response to the name. But, next to him, Yan Jin was stunned. He subconsciously repeated “Wang Gui?”

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look at him: "A’jin has seen it?"

There seemed to be some memories in the back of his mind struggling to surface. A blurry image flashed by, so fleeting that he was unable to capture it. Yan Jin shook his head. "No."

Shen Zhixian didn't pay much attention to his response. He was thinking carefully about what the Undead City was. He didn't know that the painted skin demon would know so much ...

He was wondering how to question the painted skin demon when, suddenly, there was a sound of surprise. Shen Zhixian looked down and saw the noble lady looking around before coming up to the second floor.

“...In that case, I will invite some guests back to the house then. I’m sure husband won’t mind.”

She walked in front of Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. After bowing gently to them, she politely said, "I feel familiar with the two gongzi at first sight. I don’t know whether the two gongzi would be willing to return to the manor for a few drinks?”

This caused a sudden uproar. Though this dynasty may be more open and women had a bit more freedom, but to so openly and publicly invite two unknown men back to her house for drinks...

The painted skin demon took a step back, eyebrows slightly raised, as she assumed the pose of someone watching a good show.

Yan Jin, one of the invited people, gave a cold glance at the madam and opened his mouth to refuse.

Shen Zhixian was the most composed. The image of the Wang Gui flower flashed through his mind. In the next moment, he stepped forward and held Yan Jin’s hand calmly, preventing him from refusing. Then, he smiled and said, “It’s a great honor to be invited by such a beautiful lady. We will naturally respectfully accept.”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 47

Shen Zhixian didn’t know if it was because he’d said that it was an honor to be invited by a beautiful lady, but he suddenly felt Yan Jin’s gaze burning a hole in him.

As if he was precisely the kind of heartless person who would only appreciate the new while forgetting the old.

Fortunately, the lady just wanted to make a scene by inviting them back, probably just to make her husband jealous. After asking why they came to the area, she ordered a room prepared for them and told them to go and rest.

“Thank you for your trouble.” After smiling and sending away the steward who showed them the way, Shen Zhixian rubbed the space between his eyebrows and tried to placate Yan Jin. “Don’t be angry. My only intention for coming here is to make discreet inquiries about the Undead City.”

Yan Jin’s expression relaxed a bit. Shen Zhixian saw this and knew that he’ll want to take advantage of this opportunity. As a result, he pushed him to the room the steward had prepared for him. “The two are probably just calculating each other. Let’s rest first, and we can talk more about it tomorrow.”

The steward didn’t know about their relationship and arranged two separate rooms for them. Shen Zhixian seemed indifferent, but Yan Jin was a bit reluctant. “I want us to be together…”

The guest rooms had two guards posted outside. The two guards saw them hovering at the door and looked at them quietly.

Shen Zhixian gave a light cough and said brightly, “We’re in other people’s home. Be polite. Be good.” He pushed Yan Jin into the room and returned to the room next door.

In fact, since Yan Jin had confessed to him that day, they’d stopped sleeping in separate rooms. Today, they were suddenly separated. Let alone Yan Jin, even Shen Zhixian actually felt...a bit uncomfortable.

He discovered that he always seemed to subconsciously want to say something to Yan Jin.

When he was drinking water, he wanted to ask Yan Jin whether he also wanted some water. When he was ready for bed, he wanted to ask Yan Jin to shake out the bedcover.

Shen Zhixian stood in front of the bed for a long time, then he sighed helplessly.

This was not good. How could a person live in the world so dependent on others? Habit was a terrible thing.

He took off his shoes and socks, hung his coat on the stand next to the bed, shook out the bedcover, and was about to rest. But, he suddenly heard a sound coming from the nearby window.

Shen Zhixian didn’t move for a moment. Then, he walked on silent barefoot to the window and cracked open the shutter.

This window opened into a bamboo grove. The moonlight illuminated the night, causing the bamboo grove to cast long shadows. Aside from the wind stirring the leaves and creating a muted fluttering noise, the surrounding area was very quiet.

Yan Jin stood in front of the window. As soon as the window opened, his gaze fell on Shen Zhixian’s figure.

Shen Zhixian’s grip on the shutter tightened slightly. After a moment, he opened the window wider and said, “What happened?”

Yan Jin said softly, "I want to come in."

Shen Zhixian immediately casted his wild imaginations to the back of his mind and stretched out his hand without hesitation.

Yan Jin took his hand. Then, he took a leap and entered the room.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes were smiling. He quietly whispered, “You didn’t come through the door but insist on climbing through the window.”

Yan Jin also whispered back to him, "I was afraid you won't let me in."

He lowered his head and saw Shen Zhixian’s bare feet. He wrapped one arm around Shen Zhixian and urged him toward the bed. “The ground is cold.”

Shen Zhixian obediently returned to the bed and watched the other party unhesitantly climbed in beside him. He lightly pushed him. “You need to go back to your room early tomorrow morning.”

Otherwise, people will see that, instead of sleeping in separate bedrooms, they had crowded in on one bed...Shen Zhixian expressed that he was old and was easily shy.

Yan Jin murmured “Mmn,” but Shen Zhixian couldn’t be sure if he heard or not. Because, right after, Yan Jin wrapped him in his arms with great familiarity and extinguished the candle with his fingers, plunging the room into darkness.

Shen Zhixian put his hands on Yan Jin’s waist, as was his habit, and nestled in his arms, preparing for a good night sleep.

Shen Zhixian was actually very happy to be held by Yan Jin like this.

His constitution had always been cold, and he would often feel cold when he sleeps. In Qingyun Sect, he always had a small stove handwarmer in bed. The stove had an array that kept it hot. But, although it was warm, it wasn’t very comfortable to hold. It’d made him feel both frustrated and helpless.

And now being held by Yan Jin...

Yan Jin was just a purely natural, pollution-free, super large heater built for him!

Surrounded by this reassuring warmth, Shen Zhixian was about to fall asleep, when he suddenly heard Yan Jin calling him softly.

"... Huh?" He mumbled, half-asleep and half-wake. His voice was so low that it was almost inaudible, and he couldn't barely keep his eyes open.

Yan Jin's lips touched his forehead, and the hot sensation made him feel a little itchy. He shrank back a little and heard Yan Jin asking him, "...Sui Xian, during that time, what did you see?"

Shen Zhixian’s fatigue was too deep. He didn’t respond and opened his eyes halfway. That was, until he suddenly felt a weight against his body—Yan Jin had rolled over on top of him and was pressing down against him. A pair of dark eyes stared intently at his face.

Shen Zhixian’s drowsiness evaporated a little, and he became acutely aware of the man pressed against his chest. Yan Jin’s body was hard and slightly heavy, even though he didn’t put the entirety of his weight on Shen Zhixian. He said, "What are you doing?"

The candle was blown out. In the darkness, his other four senses were acutely magnified. Shen Zhixian felt Yan Jin’s hand slowly pressed against his waist and then poked him tentatively.

Who knew where exactly he was poking. But, Shen Zhixian trembled stiffly. His back was straight, and his tone trembled for a moment. "Don't

touch me..."

He thought Yan Jin had only touched him inadvertently, and so he tried to push Yan Jin away, only to find that Yan Jin was unmoved. The poking at his waist became increasingly more accurate.

Since transmigrating, Shen Zhixian’s identity had been quite big. Aside from Yan Jin at the beginning, there wasn’t anything he truly feared. The only other thing that he was somewhat afraid of was…the soft area around his waist being touched.

—That was his most sensitive place.

The crooked student, Yan Jin, continued to poke his waist without restraint and even intensified the rubbing on one side.

Shen Zhixuan's waist was very thin with no extra fat on his lower abdomen. In order to sleep comfortably, his lining straps were fastened loosely, but Yan Jin's long fingers caused it to unravel.

Warm fingertips suddenly touched delicate skin.

Shen Zhixian sucked in a quick breath. He tugged Yan Jin’s collar, whispering, “A’jin!”

His original intention was to stop Yan Jin, but this sound only gave Yan Jin more courage. Not only did Yan Jin not stop, he instead placed his entire palm against Shen Zhixian’s bare skin.

Shen Zhixian was scalded by the blazing palm, and he began to struggle. But Yan Jin pressed him firmly underneath him. Shen Zhixian couldn't move and could only passively bear the sensation that Yan Jin was giving him ...

A kind of itching.

Yan Jin seemed to have discovered something extremely interesting. He

slightly curled his fingertips and poked gently, learning without instructions.

Shen Zhixian originally didn’t want to use too much force and instead chose to endure. The result was that Yan Jin called “Sui Xian” and increased his attacks. Shen Zhixian laughed unsteadily. “Don’t...It’s very ticklish.”

Yan Jin showed a thoughtful look. He carefully recalled the moving picture that Shen Zhixian had destroyed inside the pleasure boat. Two long legs pressed down on Shen Zhixian, who was struggling to kick his legs. He squeezed Shen Zhixian's two thin wrists with one hand and held it over his head. Then, the other hand wandered freely lower on his waist.

Shen Zhixian couldn't hold himself completely still. His body trembled and intermittent laughter sprang from his mouth. He threatened. "Ajin ... you crooked disciple! Hey, don't poke me anymore! You can poke me again tomorrow. You say something... ah! "

This seemed to be the same as what was seen in the picture, and it also seemed to be different.

In the picture, the two people also had one on top and one on the bottom. They were partially undressed and the person lying on the bottom had an expression that was hard to describe. It was part pleasure and part endurance.

Yan Jin didn’t know what they were doing. Before he could take a closer look, Shen Zhixian had destroyed the picture.

The darkness couldn’t prevent him from seeing Shen Zhixian's expression. Shen Zhixian’s face was red and the corners of his eyes were teary, making his eyes look slightly wet. His breaths came out in small pants.

Yan Jin felt as if there was a fire in his heart, burning hot and sweeping through his own body. It seemed to burn him and Shen Zhixian together.

Shen Zhixian finally managed to free one hand. He tried to calm his breath.

His eyes were filled with laughter and the hand that was gripping Yan Jin’s wrist trembled. His tone was unstable as he panted, “Who taught you this?”

"Booklet ... ... "

"Huh? "

He’d murmured his answer too softly, and Shen Zhixian couldn’t understand clearly. Yan Jin said, "If I can’t read the booklet, then can I read Sui Xian’s books?”

As he said this, he was keenly aware that, from Shen Zhixian’s reaction, the booklet and the book might be pretty similar. The more Shen Zhixian didn’t want to show him, the more he wanted to see it.

Probably this was... Yan Jin's young adult curiosity and rebellion?

Shen Zhixian: "..."

Shen Zhixian knew that Yan Jin was talking about the booklet that belonged to the painted skin demon. He didn’t want to raise a crooked apprentice so he flatly refused. "No."

Yan Jin stopped his movements. "Sui Xian……"

"Coquettish is useless. A’jin, you’re older now., You have to be obedient—Your hands are not allowed to move! Didn’t you hear—!"

Was Yan Jin obedient?

Maybe during the day. But, definitely not when night fell.

In the dark night, all those secret thoughts surfaced without obstruction and became unbridled.

Yan Jin easily got rid of Shen Zhixian's imprisonment, and scene from earlier was once again repeated.

This time, he was determined to make Shen Zhixian relent. As a result, his mischief got worse. Shen Zhixian couldn’t stop him without using spiritual power. He struggled and dodged in the narrow space. He laughed in an uncontrolled manner, his eyes turning red. A tear drip from the corner of his eyes, leaving a moist trail in its wake.

Originally, Shen Zhixian intended to clenched his teeth and refused to agree. But Yan Jin was a healthy hot-blooded male who was lying so close to his sweetheart ...

Shen Zhixian felt a bulging hotness pressed against him. His back stiffened. This was no good.

Although he was willing to make intimate contact with Yan Jin, he‘d wanted to move slow. Fortunately, Yan Jin hadn’t tried touching him more intimately nor understood this kind of thing yet. Since he didn't understand it very well, he just acted by instinct and didn't do much.

Before things became more difficult to control, Shen Zhixian took a deep breath and resolutely abandoned his previous stance. "Okay, okay ... don't make a mess. I’ll let you look at it. I can show it to you..."

He pushed Yan Jin angrily without any real strength. "I'll give it to you tomorrow. Don’t cause any more trouble."

Yan Jin stopped his hand. He didn’t know when but the fire in his body seemed to have transferred to his lower abdomen, making him feel a bit uncomfortable. He felt that he needed to be next to Shen Zhixuan to be slightly more comfortable.

He had never felt this way before and didn’t understand. Although he wanted to understand what was going on, Shen Zhixian began talking again and he didn’t want to miss anything. He could only bury his head in the crook of Shen Zhixian’s neck and pressed softly into him. He murmured huskily, "Give it to me now..."

Shen Zhixian originally had no reaction, but a flame seemed to be slowly consuming him. He gritted his teeth and tried to ignore its existence. Yielding, he said, “You let go. Let me get up first.”

Yan Jin obediently let go and pulled back. He flipped a finger to light the candle and sat up holding Shen Zhixuan.

Shen Zhixian seemed a little hesitant. Yan Jin looked at him intently, and Shen Zhixian sensed that Yan Jin would continue to play around if he didn’t take it out.

Shen Zhixian helplessly rummaged through his storage bag and pulled out three books, which he quickly placed in Yan Jin's hands. One of the three books was the same one that he’d recently recovered from Yan Jin.

Of course, there were more than three books, but the content of these books weren’t too bad, while the latter...Shen Zhixian didn't feel anything when he was reading it, but if Yan Jin read it...

Ssss!

Shen Zhixian felt his face getting hot.

Noticing that Yan Jin was about to say something and knowing what he was going to say, Shen Zhixian tried to sound fierce and said severely, "Don't think about anything else! If you’re too noisy, I really will get angry!"

Yan Jin agreed in a low voice and carefully put the books in his storage bag. Joy brightened his eyes, as if he was a small child who’d finally gotten the candy he wanted. Even his cold face had noticeably softened.

So noisy, so sleepless. Shen Zhixian didn't want to lie down anymore. Instead, he leaned on Yan Jin's arms to gossip and began talking about the painted skin demon again.

"Painted skin demons are amazing. How can you stay indifferent, Sui Xian?”

"Why should I be moved? " Shen Zhixian said carelessly. “The skin is the least demanding. In a hundred years, everyone will become bones...Oh yes, another reason is that I like pretty things. After all, I need to treat my eyes kindly.”

He tilted his head to look at Yan Jin. His gaze slid from Yan Jin's eyebrows down to Yan Jin's lips.

Yan Jin's appearance was the tough, manly style. With long, sword-like eyebrows, dark eyes, pale lips, and a constantly cold and frowning expression. When not talking, the whole person looked introverted and cold. But occasionally he would also show a strong oppression, making people unconsciously obey him.

Shen Zhixian liked his type very much. Although Yan Jin was quiet, his every move was incredibly reassuring.

In this unscrupulous world, he was strong and ruthless and cold. It made Shen Zhixian can’t help but want to stir him up, to pull off his indifferent mask and see what other expressions he can show.

Shen Zhixian saw Yan Jin's ears turned a little red, so he smiled a little and boasted seriously, “My A’jin is much better than her.”

Yan Jin wasn’t angry at being compared to the painted skin demon. He lowered his eyelashes and saw Shen Zhixian’s smile. He heard Shen Zhixian saying “My A’jin” and his throat became tight, making it difficult for him to speak.

Shen Zhixian remembered the mischief that he had just gotten into, and wanted to avenge himself. He continued to tease him thoughtlessly. "After seeing A’jin, I can’t see anyone else...Hey!"

Yan Jin suddenly raised his hand to hold the back of Shen Zhixian’s head and tilted his head up.

Men were probably self-taught when it came to this kind of thing. In other words, men can’t resist stimulations. In the past, Yan Jin wanted to get intimate, he would only stay on the surface. This time he wanted to struggle against the restrictions, no longer content with simple kissing.

Shen Zhixian’s head was tightly clasp, preventing him from pulling away. He could only slightly raise his face to receive a short but kiss. When Shen Zhixian managed to push himself away, his heart felt as if it was going to pop out of chest.

“You’re making trouble again!” Shen Zhixian tried to calm his excessively fast heart beat and said without any deterrent. His voice was a little soft. He could even hear it himself. His face turned red and turned his head away from Yan Jin.

Although Yan Jin was reprimanded by him, he was not annoyed. Looking at Shen Zhixian's slightly flushed cheeks, he whispered in his ear, "Me too."

"... Mmn?"

Yan Jin didn’t speak anymore. Meanwhile, Shen Zhixuan’s head rested on his shoulder.

Their breathing sounded in his ears. Shen Zhixian didn’t know that his face had turned red.

He endured for a while, feeling that not only were his cheeks getting hot, but also the place next to Yan Jin's chest on his back was getting hot, which made him feel a little unbearable.

Shen Zhixian pulled open Yan Jin's hand, stood up casually, shoved his shoes on carefully, and pretended to walk calmly towards the window: "It’s hot in here. We to let in some cool breeze."

The partially closed window was reopened. Soon, Shen Zhixian could feel a little bit of coolness and patted his cheeks.

He looked out casually. The moonlight was dappled on the ground, and occasionally one or two insects sounded in the bamboo forest.

Yan Jin didn't follow him to the window. Shen Zhixian stood for a while, feeling calmer and more relieved. He was planning to go back to sleep. Raising his hand, he wanted to pull the wide window back a little, but something in the distance suddenly caught his attention.

Shen Zhixian didn’t move for a moment. Then, he suddenly leaned out of the window in surprise, "...What is that?"

It was a thick, black spiritual cloud, resembling a monster with fangs and claws. It hovered in the sky not too far away.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 48.1

The monstrous-looking black cloud exuded an ominous aura as it floated in mid-air. Suddenly, it sank down, as if sucked in by something, and completely disappeared.

The sky returned to its usual clarity, as if nothing had happened. But, Shen Zhxian’s heart sank and a sense of uneasiness surfaced, which caused him to stare out in surprise for a brief moment.

With the bamboo grove blocking his view, Shen Zhixian couldn’t see what was over there. He could only discern that it was within the boundary of the manor.

He beckoned Yan Jin over. Yan Jin arrived with a coat, which he placed on Shen Zhixian. “What’s wrong?”

“I think there's something wrong there.” Shen Zhixian frowned slightly, still feeling uneasy. He hadn't felt like this for a long time, and the strange cloud made him anxious. That strange black cloud gave him an indescribable sense of foreboding.

Shen Zhixian couldn’t say where that weird black cloud went, but he instinctively felt that it wasn’t anything good. He pulled away from Yan Jin and stepped back a little. Stretching his hand toward the window’s edge, he easily flipped over to the other side. “Let’s go take a look?”

Even as he spoke this question, he’d already take two steps away. Yan Jin leaped out the window without saying a word and followed closely behind him.

After passing through the bamboo grove, they arrived at a small, abandoned garden. The garden looked like it’d been deserted for a long time, such that dead leaves and weeds covered the entire area.

They walked with vigilance and discovered that there was no one about--It was so late that the patrolling guards would not come to this remote place.

The further they walked, the more uneasy Shen Zhixian felt. The night was heavy, and the air seemed to be cloaked in an oppressive silence. The pale moonlight fell across dust-covered rocky hills on either side of them.

They walked quietly and stealthily. Until suddenly, the sounds of dead leaves being stepped on rang out in the silence. They stopped immediately and, after listening, realized that the sound seemed to come from the corner. It was seemed as if someone was about to turn the corner

From the corner of Shen Zhixian’s eyes, he saw a depression in the tall rocky hill beside him and immediately pulled Yan Jin over to hide within its shadow.

The small depression was shallow but it happened to face away from the moon’s light. Unless someone was looking carefully, it would be difficult to see them.

Their hiding place was also very narrow so they had to stand pressed against each other. Yan Jin was on the outside, boxing Shen Zhixian in. Fearing that there wouldn’t be enough space for Yan Jin to hide, Shen Zhixian caught him by the waist and pulled him in closer.

Because they were so close together, the difference in height and body shape became quite obvious, making it seem as if Shen Zhixian was actively and enthusiastically embracing Yan Jin.

However, Shen Zhixian didn’t realize this. He only found that Yan Jin was too tall and was blocking his sight. As a result, he pulled Yan Jin sideways and rose on his toes to look over his shoulders.

He saw the person who’d just turned the corner.

—Madam Meng who invited them to the house.

The owner of this manor was the young master who liked to linger in pleasure boats. He was surnamed Meng, with a single character Yun as his first name. He was also a wealthy businessman.

His parents were killed by mountain bandits several years ago. Meng Yun was in the middle of making funeral arrangements when he met a woman. After several exchanges, the two fell in love and became a pair of husband and wife--that woman was the current Madam Meng.

Meng Yun’s ability to do business was quite good, and he could be regarded as a wealthy man. His favorite hobby was to linger in pleasure boats. Whenever he became free, he would run to that place of pleasure. He also liked to learn literary talents and especially liked to compose poetry for these beautiful women...Even though those beauties never recited any of his works.

These were all from the mouth of Madam Shen’s steward, whom Shen Zhixian had questioned. He didn’t comment on Meng Yun’s behavior but only asked because he was curious. This Madam Meng who dared to go to a pleasure boat to retrieve her husband, what was she doing here alone in the middle of the night?

The direction she came from was exactly where the dark cloud had disappeared. Shen Zhixian quietly watched her walk step by step back. She looked extremely tired, with her eyes nearly half-closed.

Madam Meng...seemed to be hiding a little secret.

Madam Meng soon disappeared. Shen Zhixian waited for a while to ensure that there were no more movements. Then, he pushed Yan Jin. “Go out.”

After stepping out, Shen Zhixian stood in moonlight and quickly discovered

that Yan Jin’s ears had turned red.

He stopped and stared in surprise at Yan Jin’s ear. Then, he let out a meaningful sound of understanding.

However, Yan Jin was very calm and had no expression on his face. He only looked at Shen Zhixian quietly, as if it wasn’t him who had red ears.

It was just that his slightly clenched fist revealed a little of his nervousness.

Shen Zhixian couldn’t help but want to laugh. Yan Jin’s reaction was very interesting, making Shen Zhixian want to tease him. Unfortunately, the timing wasn’t right. He still hadn’t discovered what happened with the dark cloud and Madam Meng. As a result, he could only suppress this naughty desire in his heart and took the initiative to grab Yan Jin’s hand and pull him forward.

They walked for a while, following Madam Meng. Suddenly, darkness glimmered across their eyes and the surrounding area seemed to blurred for a brief moment before quickly returning to normal. But, the moonlight seemed to be blocked by some invisible barrier.
The temperature dropped suddenly. After the rockery, there was a small courtyard that looked quite shabby. Shen Zhixuan whispered, "There’s a formation here."

They broke into a formation.

However, this formation only served as a shield. It wasn’t too advanced, and its purpose was to prevent ordinary people from discovering this courtyard. However, because Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were cultivators, it didn’t affect them much.

Several large trees were planted around the courtyard. Shen Zhixian recognized them as locust trees, with branches burdened with layers upon layers of leaves. In the courtyard was a small dilapidated wooden house that looked as if it’d been falling into disrepair for many years. Because the door was slanted, a large gap was exposed next to the ground.

A rusty lock hung on the door. Shen Zhixian picked up a branch and poked it. The seemingly fragile lock shook but did not break. Instead, a lot of fine rusty powder fell down, revealing blurred lines underneath the rust.

Shen Zhixian’s thoughts spun. The lock was ancient and rusty. It obviously hadn’t been opened for a long time. Then, why did Madam Meng come here?...It couldn’t have been because she just wanted to take a walk.

Suddenly, a dark yellow piece of paper caught the corner of Shen Zhixian’s eyes. He bent over and picked up half of the paper talisman that was lying in the grass. The edges of the paper talisman was burnt black, as if it’d been burned.

However, the paper talisman still looked very new. Perhaps, Madam Meng recently brought it here. Shen Zhixian studied the paper talisman, his frown gradually deepening. Using the tree branch, he once again gently scratched at the rusty lock.

Once the rust was nearly scratched away, Shen Zhixian was finally able to determine that the pattern on the lock matched the pattern on the paper talisman.

"This is ..."

Although the pattern looked a little familiar, Shen Zhixian couldn’t remember what it was. Yan Jin took a closer look at the paper talisman in his hand and calmly said, “Attraction Seal”

Shen Zhixian took a breath of cold air and repeated, “Attraction Seal.”

How could ordinary people get such a thing? Did Madam Meng know what this was?

Attraction Seal, as its name suggested, were talismans that can attract various “spirits.” The so-called spirit could be a demon spirit or a wandering soul spirit. The type of spirits that were attracted would also

correlate with the cultivator’s strength.

The higher the maker’s cultivation, the more powerful the “spirit” that was attracted. If cultivators such as Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were to draw the seal, in all likelihood, they would end up calling a big demon. However, there was no trace of spiritual power on this talisman, indicating that it was made by a regular human. As a result, it could only attract new cultivated demons and small wandering souls.

However, the locks still have traces of spiritual aura on it.

Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered the dark cloud he’d just seen earlier and his thoughts deepend. After looking around for a while, he saw many scorched black fragments among the roots of the weeds.

It was the ashes left after the paper talisman was burned.

What did Madam Meng just do here?

No matter how weak the talisman was, if they were used in large numbers, who knew what kind of creatures it could summon If the black cloud was made up of eighty percent burnt talisman, then where were all the spirits?

What secret was hidden in the yard?

As countless doubts surged up, Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered the painted skin demon’s words. He realized that he was mistaken. According to the painted skin demon, those who enter the Undead City were not human. They would also be marked with the Wang Gui flower. And, in order to leave, they would have to pay a price.

Madam Meng had the Wang Gui flower etched on her wrist. That meant that she’d come from the Undead City. But, why did she leave and what price did she have to pay?

Earlier, when Shen Zhixian saw that she had no spiritual power, he subconsciously regarded her as an ordinary mortal .

Yan Jin obviously thought of this too. With a slight movement of his hand, he pulled his sword out of its sheath. Suddenly, a faint, nearly inaudible chirping sound came from his feet, interrupting his movements.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin both looked down at the same time. They saw a small pile of fur squeezed out from the ground by the crooked door.

It had squeezed through the narrow space, causing it’s hair to become messy and covered with mud. Once it got out, it collapsed in exhaustion, softly chirping. .

—It was a baby demon bird that was covered in mud, making it difficult for people to see its true color.

They were surprised to see living things in this desolate place, much less a weak, a little guy looked as if he might just die on the spot.

Shen Zhixuan squatted down, poking at the branches of her hand, and gently poked at the little bird’s tired, trembling claws.

The little demon bird was tired and covered with mud. When it suddenly discovered two people next to it, it trembled in fear. Thinking that they were going to hurt it, the bird struggled hard to stand up.

Shen Zhixian didn’t know if its wings were injured but, even after flapping a few times, it couldn’t fly. It could only crawl on the ground and attempted to escape.

However, the birds' small legs were still very short. It wasn’t as fast as Shen Zhixian. After the birds took two steps, Shen Zhixian used the small branch to corral it back.

But, a faint light flashed as the little demon bird bumped into an invisible barrier. It fell back and began to cry.

“Ahhhhh!”

Probably because it was hurt, it didn’t have enough strength to get away. The little claws kicked and kicked but it couldn’t kick them away. Finally, its big eyes burst into tears.

Shen Zhixian didn’t expect it to be so coquettish. He turned it around with the branch. “Don’t cry.”

The little demon bird seemed to be worried about something. I suppressed a scream of fear and stood up quickly. Taking two steps back, it watched them with wariness. “You, who are you?!”

"It doesn't matter who we are, what's important is what’s in there?"

Who knew whether it was this sentence that caused the little demon bird to be so frightened. But, it shivered and began to show an expression of terror. In a trembling voice, it said, “You, you don’t want to wake up...Hush! You can’t talk nonsense. You might wake it up!”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 48.2

The little demon bird panicked incoherently, and though Shen Zhixian didn’t understand it, he could guess that there might be something powerful locked inside. That thing might pose a great threat to the little bird's life, so much so that it dared not even shout loudly.

Seeing Shan Zhixian standing there and looking as if he was going to touch the lock, the little bird was so anxious that it stumbled and rushed to him. It’s small beak caught Shen Zhixian’s hem and tried to drag him back. “No way. You can’t go in. Chirp, chirp! It’s terrible!”

Shen Zhixian nearly touched the rusty lock when suddenly his hand froze. A startled look appeared on his face.

After a short pause, he flipped his wrist and a long sword appeared in his hand.

The clear sword emitted a cold chill that permeated the place. The sword trembled, as if it’d encountered something that made it excited. Shen Zhixian could even sensed that the long-sleeping Frost Return sword spirit….

There was a trace of wanting to wake.

The little bird was stunned. Yan Jin’s gaze swept over. After a moment of surprise, he said, “This is?”

Shen Zhixian held the hilt with one hand and the blade with the other. He exerted a little force to prevent it from moving. The sword let out a cold

light, its body trembling. As Frost Return's owner, Shen Zhixian could clearly feel its agitation.

"There's devil…" Shen Zhixian murmured. His sword Frost Return was most sensitive to devil qi. When Yan Shen tried to frame Yan Jin with devil qi, it had trembled even when there was only a little present.

This time, not only did the sword tremble, but even the sword spirit itself, who'd been sleeping for a long time, had been surprised--Just what was inside this room?!

The uneasiness that Shen Zhixian had just suppressed now resurfaced with more intensity. Shen Zhixian put away the sword and shook his head at Yan Jin. However, he no longer had any intention of opening the door. He bent over and picked up the little bird, then motioned to Yan Jin to leave.

Yan Jin hesitated for a moment, looking at the rusty lock. Then, without a word, he turned to leave with Shen Zhixian.

They quietly walked back the same way they came. The only difference this time was that Shen Zhixian was carrying a little demon bird.

Perhaps, the little bird was scared stupid because it didn't speak at all. It wasn't until Shen Zhixian had walked past the large rocks that it'd been hiding under that it suddenly began to struggle and chirped in pain.

Shen Zhixian's footsteps paused, and he looked down at it.

The little bird was very small, not even half the size of Shen Zhixian's palm. His hand was flat, and he held the bird without squeezing it.

But, the little one suddenly struggled, flapping its wings. It's head twisted and turned, and its two little clawed foot kicked wildly, even as it screamed in pain. It was as if an invisible hand was holding it by the throat. Shen Zhixian could keenly hear it dying in despair.

Shen Zhixian had a thought and moved back a step.

The effect was instantaneous. The little bird’s struggles immediately weakened. After a moment, it managed to calm down and laid tiredly in Shen Zhixian’s hand. The tip of its wings trembled slightly, and it’s little breast undulated with each breath. The beak parted opened. “It hurts…”

It turned out that the little bird couldn’t leave the yard.

There was something in the courtyard that prevented it from leaving.

Shen Zhixian asked softly, "You can't leave, can you?"

"It hurts ..." the little bird chirped and looked at him with grievances. It’s black eyes were tearful and sad. “Save me…”

It was originally guarded against Shen Zhixian. But now it lost its willpower due to the pain. It didn’t care much and started talking.

“I’ve been caught in here for a long time and can’t get out…” The little bird chirped and let out a big cry. “There are still many like me...being eaten…”

The more he heard, the more serious Shen Zhixian’s expression became.

From the little bird’s story, it’d been trapped in this courtyard for a long time. In that period of time, it’d witnessed the arrival of many little demons and wandering souls that had been called here. They were then “eaten” by the thing inside. None were spared.

Except for the little bird.

Even the little bird didn’t know what was going on. It just woke up one day and found itself in this terrible purgatory. A thick, round black qi was gobbling up little demons and little wandering spirits. It’s two claws trembled, but there was nowhere it could run. In the end, it could only curl up the corner furthest from the dark qi, shivering.

It was odd that other little demons and wandering spirits were swallowed

cleanly except for the little bird, who'd hid for a long time and managed to stay safe. Until today, when it came out from its hiding spot.

"It hurts ... as soon as I try to leave, it will hurt..." The little bird's tears fell as he cried intermittently, "I can't leave. If I leave, I'll die...Help me…"

The little bird wanted them to save it and help it leave. But, Shen Zhixian still had no clue about what was trapping it. From Frost Return's response, he could only guess that it must be a very powerful demon.

Shen Zhixian put the little bird back in it's hiding spot. Though the little bird continued to tremble, it stood firm and stared at them with eager eyes.

However, Shen Zhixian had no intention of taking it away right now. One reason was that he could not take it away. The other reason was that he didn't intend to immediately explore the secrets within the courtyard. Frost Return's restlessness and his own sense of uneasiness warned him to proceed with caution.

Even if Madam Meng was not directly involved in these matters, she must be aware of it. He may be able get the answer out of Madam Meng...

After thinking it over, he whispered with Yan Jin for a while. They decided not to hit the grass so quickly.

After telling the little bird not to run about too much, they avoided the guard and returned silently back to Shen Zhixian's room.

It wasn't too early since only an hour had passed.

This time, Shen Zhixian was finally able to sleep peacefully. He yawned lazily and got into bed. Just before going to sleep, he only remembered to vaguely tell Yan Jin to get up earlier and quietly go back to his room. Then, he promptly fell asleep.

Yan Jin grunted, sounding like he agreed. But, he had no intention of following. So, the next day, a stiff face Shen Zhixian, who wore his outer

coat draped over his shoulders, opened the window. Just then, a guard happened to be patrolling past. The two stared at each other in dismay before Shen Zhixian finally slammed the shutter close.

A quarter of an hour later, Shen Zhixian opened the door calmly and walked out neatly dressed, followed by Yan Jin, who was also neatly dressed.

The steward, who'd just arrived with breakfast, was prepared to ask them where they planned on going next. Instead, he stared at them, speechless.

He looked in bewilderment over at the room that was originally prepared for Yan Jin. At this moment, it looked completely undisturbed, as if it'd been uninhabited the entire night. After returning his gaze back to Yan Jin, he asked politely and cautiously, "Was your room arrangements not appropriate?"

Before Yan Jin could say something that shouldn't be said, Shen Zhixian quickly interrupted with a response and then casually began to inquire about the Meng Manor.

In the end, these were the two innocent guests that had been dragged in by the two masters of the house. As a result, the steward was very polite to them. Although he didn't answer all of Shen Zhixian's questions, he still responded to the more innocuous questions.

It must be said that Madam Meng had some skill to so thoroughly control the household. Although the manor belonged to the Mengs, the people within respected her very much. Even when Madam Meng took people to break into the pleasure boats to look for Meng Yun, the steward still refused to talk badly of her. "Madam is wonderful and is very friendly to us."

Shen Zhixian smiled and agreed with his few words. After pondering, he proposed to see Madam Meng and say farewell to her.

The steward shook his head, apologizing. "Madam said that she'd impulsively affected the young masters so she wanted to come over to apologize. However, she didn't sleep well last night and fell ill this

morning. It’s difficult for her to get up. Please forgive us.”

Such a coincidence that she would conveniently become sick.

Shen Zhixian recalled the exhaustion he’d seen on Madam Meng’s face as she passed by them in the middle of the night. He was about to answer when he heard a voice asking, “Where are the two young masters that the lady had invited back last night? Please invite them to come out. I want to see them…”

The words were said with a trace of anger and jealousy.

Shen Zhixian: "..."

The owner of the house that hadn’t wanted to see them was finally jealous and had arrived to settle accounts with them.

In truth, after witnessing the scene at the pleasure boat last night, Shen Zhixian didn’t particularly like Meng Yun.

Madam Meng was gentle and considerate. She was the model of a virtuous wife that many people admire and depended on. He should cherish her. After all, the place that Meng Yun liked to frequent was all too commonplace.

Even though he only went to the pleasure boats without hanging lanterns and limited himself to watching the girls play and sing a few songs. And, on the occasions when he became too drunk and stayed overnight, he would refuse to let other women serve him. In the eyes of other people, he was indeed quite worthy of Madam Meng.

However, Shen Zhixian still felt uncomfortable. He’d always believed that romantic love should be reciprocal and should have equality, devotion, and loyalty. Meng Yun’s behavior really hinted otherwise.

But, when all was said and done, this was still other people’s family affair. He didn’t understand the real situation nor did he know how the couple got

along with each other. It was difficult to intrude and, if not because he needed to inquire about the Undead City, he would have stayed away.

Now that Madam Meng refused to see them, they still had no information about the mysterious courtyard…

Shen Zhixian saw Meng Yun's frown and didn't have to think much to know what he wanted to say. He immediately said farewell.

Meng Yun originally wanted to persuade them to leave. When he saw that they intended to leave, he immediately smiled and looked a little less angry. He waved his hand and allowed the servant to present a generous gift. "Due to our recklessness, we've disturbed the two young masters. Please forgive us."

The most important thing in the Meng Mansion was money, and so to their eyes, the most important thing to Shen Zhixan must also be money.

Shen Zhixian didn't accept it and politely refused. He didn't stay long and left hand in hand with Yan Jin

The moment he left the Meng's home, Shen Zhixian unhesitantly returned to the pleasure boat.

Although the pleasure boat was not open in the daytime, Shen Zhixian didn't care much about the little servants blocking the way. He was full of high spirits, looking like a young hero from the Jianghu. He directed his summoned beast, Yan Jin, "Go and shut them all in the room."

Without saying a word, Yan Jin pulled off the long, decorative brocade ribbon on the side and used it to obstruct the servants without harming them or allowing them to slip away. He did as Shen Zhixian said and shut them all into a room.

The moment the door closed, the servants shouts became immediately muted.

Shen Zhixian nodded with satisfaction and prepared to go up to the second floor to look for the painted skin demon. When they passed by a private room, they suddenly smelled a faint fragrance.

He responded quickly and dragged Yan Jin back a few steps.

The moment he stopped, a chuckle came from inside the room. The painted skin demon stepped out and looked at them with peach blossom eyes. She said to Shen Zhixian, “The two young masters went to spend the night at the Meng Mansion. Why are you here to bully me?”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 49

The painted skin demon could change into hundreds of faces. As a result, Shen Zhixian thought that it would take some effort to find her. But, who knew that she would run through the door by herself.

Thinking that this was too unexpected, he blocked the painted skin demon’s path and indirectly tried to her back into the room. The corners of the painted skin demon’s mouth lifted up into a smile. She said bashfully, “Don’t be so anxious. You must let slave prepare first...”

Her smile stretched. But, before it could completely widen, an imposing, invisible sword qi slammed into the door panel next to ear

A few fine strands of hair fluttered to the ground.

That faint sword ray came from Yan Jin, who silently resheath the sword he’d pulled out a fraction from the scabbard.

The painted skin demon straightened and politely held the door open for Shen Zhixian. “Young Master Sui, Young Master Yan, please.”

The servants in the next room were finally rescued by their belated companions. When they came to deliver tea, they were still somewhat terrified of the two men. They poured the tea with trembling hands and, once finished, hurried out.

Shen Zhixian went straight to the topic. “What is the Undead City that you mentioned yesterday?”

Yesterday, the painted skin demon sensed that they seemed to be interested in the Undead City. Today, she heard it again. She smiled and said, “But Madam Meng was a person who came out of the Undead City. Why are you asking me? You haven’t asked her?”

Her attitude toward Madam Meng seemed to be full of frivolousness. She joked without hesitation, "This Madam Meng is really loyal to Meng Yun. These two also haven’t..."

Yan Jin silently lifted his sword and rested it gently on the table, his thumb pressed against the sword hilt, as if prepared to pull out the sword at any moment.

“Ah-hem. The Undead City, it’s not a good place. It looked bright from the outside, but it’s actually a cage. Once you’re inside, it’s very hard to come out.” The painted skin demon raised her sleeve to cover her lips and coughed softly. “If you two planned to enter the Undead City, please be careful.”

“Why do you say this?”

When speaking of the Undead City, the charming smile on the painted skin demon’s face faded. She succinctly said, “It is said that in order to leave the Undead City, there is a price that must be paid.”

"What's the price?"

The painted skin demon indifferently lifted the cover from her teacup and took a leisurely sip. “I don’t know. I only know that when I saw Madam Meng about a hundred years ago, she was just a small thrush bird--Ah, with bright red tail feathers. Very good-looking.”

Shen Zhixian thought of the little bird that was hiding in the courtyard last night. Unfortunately, it was covered in mud and he didn’t see the little bird’s tail feathers.

That courtyard was very strange. It can be assumed that the identity of the

little chirping bird they'd found there wasn't simple. It was also hard to tell what type of relationship it might have with Madam Meng.

Spirit seals and rusty locks. Madam Meng haunting the courtyard in the middle of the night. The little bird who'd escaped certain death. The difficult-to-leave Undead City.

It was as if there was an invisible thread connecting them.

Shen Zhixian felt that he'd hit upon the general truth, but the details were still elusive and there was no evidence.

He thoughtfully swished the tea cup in his hand, watching as the tea leaves floating on top of the hot water swirled about and asked softly, "A hundred years ago. It's a long time...That little thrush, that is, Madam Meng, what's her situation?"

He wanted to ask for the details, but the painted skin demon smiled and avoided answering directly. "The little thrush was a bird raised by a girl who used to sing in one of the pleasure boats...I see countless people daily, and it's been such a long time. Even now, I'd forgotten what that girl looked like. How can I remember a little bird?"

Immediately after she finished speaking, she saw Yan Jin moved his hand slightly. She swallowed and hesitated. "Well, let me think about it again. Now that I think about it...After some time, that little thrush was able to gain a human shape. I would occasionally see her transform into a human figure and pretend to be a girl working in the pleasure boat. She was quite close to a guest...I don't know anymore."

As the painted skin demon recalled the past, she seemed a little lost. At that time, she'd happened to meet a demon who came from the Undead City and heard a bit about it. The things she'd heard frightened her. She'd tried her utmost to avoid that demon and ended up running away. How could she have time to care about that little thrush?

She only remembered vaguely...

Shen Zhixian placed his tea cup back on the saucer, making a crisp, clanging sound. The noise pulled the painted skin demon back from her distant memories. The charming beauty recollected with some uncertainty, “Mmm, whatever happened to that little thrush, I was too busy running and didn’t pay much attention to it.”

The painted skin demon stood up, half complaining and half angry. "Young Master Yan is so fierce. Young Master Sui, you shouldn’t care too much about him..." she whispered. But, she no longer cared about the two and went out the door.

…...

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin decided to stay longer in Yangzhou.

They no longer asked the painted skin demon questions. Madam Meng seemed to have fallen ill and no longer left the house. Meng Yun, whether it was because he’d turned over a new leaf or decided to epitomize the return of the prodigal son, stayed home the past few days and no longer frequented pleasure boats. He only left his residence to check up on his business shops when necessary and would only walk a round before returning home.

It was said that he was taking good care of his wife, but it was difficult to tell whether this was true or false.

At night, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin secretly concealed their bodies and stole into the Meng Manor to see the little bird.

That little bird was afraid of death so when Shin Zhixian let it hide in a small crevice in the rock, it really stayed there.

It’d just rained this evening and the air was still moist. The little bird probably took the opportunity to take a bath and washed away all the mud on its body, revealing its original appearance. It jumped with flapping wings beside the rockery, muttering through its little bird’s beak.

It seemed to be singing something.

Shen Zhixian walked over silently and made a quiet gesture toward Yan Jin. He listened carefully to what the bird was singing.

Under the bleak moonlight, it wobbled in a circle and its little red tail feathers were revealed to their eyes.

“Tracing eyebrows and binding hairpin, the two lovers promised to stay true...Husband, ah…” The little bird seemed to be completely immersed in its own world, its wings pointed straight outward. “Do not turn your back on conjugal love…”

The clear and exquisitely beautiful voice turned out to be female.

It sounded very familiar.

Although Madam Meng had only spoken a few words with them, Shen Zhixian was very sensitive to sounds and immediately realized that this bird’s voice was very similar to Madam Meng’s voice. It was the little thrush with red tail feathers from a hundred years ago, which turned into a human female.

Shen Zhixian quickly thought about it and was analyzing the possible connection between them, when the little singing thrush suddenly changed its tune.

“Husband ah husband...so heartless!” The voice suddenly became a little sharp, filled with hatred and despair. The little thrush swayed and made another turn, staggering forward, as if chasing something. “Don’t run, don’t run ah...Come back and stay with me!”

The last note rose sharply. Shen Zhixian listened to its grievous shouts, shuddered, and pulled Yan Jin away. "Let’s go. This thrush is also abnormal."

He must have figured something out and made up his mind. As a result, he

was not in a hurry to disturb the thrush who sang alone and instead pulled Yan Jin quietly away.

Because they silently left the Meng's residence, they didn't witness when the singing thrush began to sob and wail, still in the voice of a female.

The pale moonlight illuminated it, casting a shadow on the ground. But, the shadow was not the small shadow of a bird.

It was...a figure.

Wearing a wide sleeve robe with slender wrist stretched out, five fingers outstretched, as if trying to catch something in vain.

After that night, Shen Zhixian began to explore around purposefully near Yangzhou City. On a hill near the outskirts of the city, he finally caught a weasel who was in a hurry to run.

Shen Zhixian caught it and asked, "Where are you running off to?"

There were so many mortals in Yangzhou City so it was understandable that there would be no minor demons nearby. But, even in the mountains, there were still no traces of them.

The spiritual qi in this place was abundant so there should be many minor demons. So, why were there none here?

The two of them were sword cultivators, emitting bitingly cold spiritual qi. The weasel felt the suppression of their powers and trembled. "Aiya, aiya. Immortal lords, please spare me. I've never harmed anyone, and haven't even eaten any chicks...I'm really and truly a good weasel!"

Shen Zhixian conveniently threw an incantation and trapped it in place. "Then why are you trying to escape?...Why are there so few minor demons around here?"

The weasel ran into the barrier and realized it could not escape. It anxiously

walked around in circles. “Can’t escape...Yangzhou City has a monster that will grab us small demons from time to time and turn us into a sumptuous meal. If I don’t run, then I’ll be caught and eaten!”

Shen Zhixian motioned for it to continue talking.

The weasel face was bitter. “A few years ago, a terrible monster suddenly appeared in Yangzhou City. After a period of time, it attracted many wandering souls and minor demons... Those who were attracted never returned! They all must have been eaten!”

The weasel’s eyes were thick with fear and its body shivered as it said pleadingly, “There are now fewer and fewer minor demons here. Most of them are gone. I don’t want to stay here either. Who knows when I’ll be caught and eaten? I really haven’t done any bad things. Immortal lords, please be charitable and let me go…”

Shen Zhixian lifted the barrier and the panicked weasel bowed down to them, thanked them for their grace, and ran away in a hurry.

As he looked at the weasel’s hurriedly departing back, Shen Zhixian’s eyes flashed in contemplation. He tilted his head to look at Yan Jin and softly said, “A’jin, be prepared to fight.”

Shen Zhixian began to carefully study the formation.

He made up his mind to get rid of that strange little courtyard in the Meng’s residence. After investigating for several days, he had already determined that there was a demon in the courtyard. At intervals, the formation would be used to attract many little demons and wandering souls so that the courtyard demon could devour it.

The reason the demon was devouring so madly was perhaps to strengthen its own power, perhaps for other reasons… Regardless, Shen Zhixian will not allow it to continue to exist here.

When the Spirit Attraction Seal could no longer attract minor demon beasts

and wandering spirits, who knows what the monster will do?

This was Yan Jin’s first foray in the Jianghu. His qualifications were still low. Nevertheless, it must be done for the sake of the people living here.

They decided to first set up a secret formation around the small courtyard to prevent the devil qi within from overflowing and harming ordinary people.

But, when it came to battling, Shen Zixian had no actual experience and his knowledge was mostly superficial. Unlike Yan Jin, who’d learned a bit about formations to prepare for the incident at Shilian Mountain….Moreover, he also had his protagonist's golden finger, which will surely come in handy. Therefore, in this battle, Yan Jin will have to exert himself.

After a few days of muddling through setting up a proper formation, Shen Zhixian caught Yan Jin watching the celestial constellation overnight. After pondering for a long time, he finally realized that the moment when the moonlight was the weakest and the power of heaven and earth was the most sparse...

Would perhaps leave the demon at its weakest point.

They discussed the matter again and finally decided to head over to the pleasure boat.

Anyway, the painted skin demon was still a demon who’d lived for hundreds of years. Although she can’t fight, she should have at least some life-saving abilities. There was not only the demon in the Meng Manor, but also many ordinary people. Although they’d already set up a formation, it’s better to recruit a free labor force just in case.

As they walked toward the pleasure house, a woman suddenly came out from inside, wearing a veil and holding a long scroll in her hand. She hurried away.

This figure was a little familiar. Shen Zhixian's thoughts moved slightly,

and he quietly whispered an incantation. A gust of wind blew across the woman's veil, revealing a calm face—Madam Meng.

Shen Zhixian thoughtfully watched her leave before entering the pleasure boat.

He found the painting skin demon packing up a pile of wasted paper. When she saw them, she smiled and said, “What a coincidence. That person from Meng Manor just left.”

The painted skin demon balled up the wasted paper and threw it randomly in into the brazier. The flames leaped up instantly, devouring the wasted paper cleanly. Finally, she extinguished the flames and casually said, “It took a lot of wasted paper before finally painting…”

Shen Zhixian asked casually: "Painting what?”

“Madam Meng asked me to draw a painting depicting Meng Yun tracing her eyebrows and placing a hairpin in her hair. She feared Meng Yun might disturb their relationships and wanted this painting as a means of helping them reconcile. I’d exhausted myself painting until she was satisfied.”

Shen Zhixian was thinking about the plan for tomorrow night and wasn’t too concerned when he heard the painted skin demon spoke. But then, he jerked to attention as realization dawned--Tracing the eyebrows and inserting the hairpin?

Wasn’t that the song that the thrush was singing?!

The thrush’s song resounded in Shen Zhixian’s mind. He was stunned. Then, he abruptly stood up and hurried out. “Something’s going to happen!”

Xixi: Gongzi had been changed to Young Master.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 50.1

Tonight, Meng Manor was exceptionally quiet.

Although the Meng family had wealth, the Meng couple were not demanding people so there were not many servants in the residence. Even though there weren’t many servants in the residence, Madam Meng was very considerate and allowed everyone, from the top steward to the rough messengers, to go home and rest for two days.

Many people went home with gratitude, leaving behind a few with nowhere to go. Madam Meng and Meng Yun also allowed these people to go out and have fun.

As a result, they were the only two people left in the residence.

For some reason, Madam Meng coaxed Meng Yun to drink together out in the garden pavilion.

Meng Yun was a little worried. "Your illness has just recovered. Tonight, the wind is a bit cold, so let's go back to the house."

Madam Meng had dressed up tonight, with traced eyebrows, face powder, and rouge. She wore jade earrings and on her pale wrist was a beautiful jade bracelet. Her whole person looked bright and enchanting. Hearing Meng Yun’s words, she smiled slightly and, without speaking, shook her head a little.

Meng Yun looked at her, and it seemed as if he’d returned to the moment when he first met her a few years ago. He missed it a bit, and

subconsciously showed a sincere smile on his lips. "Time had passed, but Qingqing still looked as graceful as that year.”

Madam Meng smiled and said, "At that time, Meng Husband promised to trace my eyebrows and bind my hair with a hairpin, for us to mutually stay true to each other. But, in the blink of an eye, so many years had passed.”

Meng Yun was momentarily stunned. Trace eyebrows and binding hairpin?

When did he say these things to Madam Meng?

Meng Yun racked his brain and thought for a while, but he couldn’t recall it. He decided that he must have forgotten it. After all, Madam Meng had never lied to him. He felt ashamed for forgetting and quickly took up a glass of wine, smiling to conceal his confusion. "Yes, it’d been several years. Come and have a drink with me."

He and Madam Meng touched their glass, then he raised his head and drank cleanly.

Madam Meng looked at him with a faint gaze, and then raised the wine glass to her lips. Covering her face with her sleeves, she raised her head slightly and drank the wine.

Meng Yun played with the wine glass, savoring the aftertaste, and said, "I’ve never had this wine before, but it tasted excellent.”

The wine glass was gently placed on the small table, which created a slight collision sound. Mrs. Meng whispered softly, "It’s just ordinary wine."

Then, she grabbed the scroll next to her and handed it to Meng Yun. "I asked someone to draw a picture. Meng Husband, take a look.”

Meng Yun didn’t take the scroll. Instead, he placed his hands over hers and held her hands so that they could open the scroll together.

It was a boudoir scene. In the painting, Meng Yun was bending down

slightly, tracing Madam Meng's eyebrows. On the vanity was a pair of jade hairpins and a pair of jade earrings. Aside from these, there were also other accessories, all exquisitely beautiful.

In the painting, Madam was smiling tenderly and softly. Her eyes looked in concentration at Meng Yun, watching as he clumsily held a small pen dipped in black dye and awkwardly painted her eyebrow.

The painted skin demon was very skilled in painting, which was how she'd found her footing in the world. This painting was very lifelike. As Meng Yun looked at it, he became immersed in the scene. He subconsciously released Madam Meng's hand and murmured "Qingqing" as he reached out to touch the Madam Meng in the painting.

The moment he touched the scroll with his fingertips, it suddenly brightened. The painting rippled, as if the surface was made out of water. It sucked on his fingertips and began to drag him in.

Although Meng Yun looked pale, he didn't find this weird at all. He was like a half-awake traveler who'd stepped into the mud without realizing it. His eyes took on an obsessive glint. "Qingqing looks so beautiful...I'll paint Qingqing's eyebrows for her…"

Madam Meng's hands dropped away, but the scroll didn't fall. It floated in front of them and continued to swallow Meng Yun's arm, now up to his elbow.

Madam Meng gazed at Meng Yun, who was focused only on the painting. Her eyes were slightly wet and despair floated within their watery depths. After a moment, she finally lifted her hand toward the painting.

Just as she was about to touch the scroll, a sword slashed out in a formidable manner, ripping the scroll right in the middle—and promptly divided Meng Yun and Madam Meng in the painting.

The brilliant light that illuminated out from within the scroll abruptly disappeared. Calmness settled in and the scroll dropped to the floor.

Madam Meng's expression changed drastically, and she yelled, "Who?!"

The scroll painting spit out Meng Yun's arm, even as an invisible force threw Meng Yun backward and he nearly slammed into the pavilion.

Meng Yun awakened, but he had no time to be surprised. He saw Madam Meng’s face turn pale in an instant. Even with the rouge on her cheeks, she looked wan and sallow. Her lips parted and suddenly, blood sprayed out!

“Qingqing!” Meng Yun was stunned. He’d staggered two steps away from Madam Meng but, suddenly seeing her vomit blood, he froze. Then, before he could think more about it, he immediately went to hold her up. “What's wrong with you?

“She wants to kill you!"

Shen Zhixian flew forward. He grabbed Meng Yun’s sleeves and flung him backward. With his eyes trained on Madam Meng, he pointed his sword at her. “Madam Meng had done countless harm to many spiritual beings. You’ve stolen so many in the past few years. Are you satisfied?”

Meng Yun was shaken hard by him, which made him a little dizzy. He turned slightly and saw Yan Jin. The moment he saw their appearance, he became shocked and doubtful. "How did you come in? What are you doing?"

He saw the blood on Madam Meng's lips, became anxious, and rushed toward her again. Shen Zhixian commanded, "Stop him."

Yan Jin stretched out his sword. Although he did not pull the sword out of the sheath, Meng Yun panicked and stopped.

When the scroll fell to the floor, it overturned the flask of wine and the small stove used for warming wine. The still burning charcoal spilled out as the stove was overturned. The half of the painting with Meng Yun on it was already soaked by the overturned wine. So, when the charcoal fell on it, it

instantly burst into flames.

Under the light of the fire, Madam Meng's face became even paler. She stared as the painted Meng Yun disappearing under the flames. Tears welled up from the bottom of her eyes and spilled over down her cheeks.

"Over, it's over…" She choked, holding her hand out toward the painting. She wanted to rescue the painting but she had no more energy left. Before her fingertips even got close to the painting, a small spark popped and splashed onto the back of her hand, burning her fair skin.

In tears, she looked desperately towards Meng Yun, and when she opened her mouth, her voice became a melodious songbird trill. "Trace the eyebrows and insert the hairpin, as the two lovers promised to stay true...Husband, ah…"

She shuddered. "Do not turn your back on conjugal love…"

Her voice was shrill. Meng Yun became frightened by it but still tentatively moved forward. "What's wrong?"

It was like Madam Meng couldn't hear him. She repeated the song sung by the little thrush that night.

The scroll turned to ash and was scattered by the wind. Madam Meng looked at the ash, and her voice gradually lowered. There were many pictures and scenes flashing before her eyes, many, many years ago.

Many years ago, she was just a small thrush who'd managed to take on a human form. She was raised by a girl who sang in the pleasure boat, listening to the girl singing songs day and night, she even learned how to use two voices.

She'd just become matured and was curious about everything. However, she also knew that she was different from ordinary people and that she couldn't transform as she liked. She could only quietly become a human only when the girl went out.

One day she became human again while the girl was away. The feathers on her body turned into a beautiful skirt, imitating the girls that she usually saw.

That day, it was very lively outside. The girl went out early in the morning and still hadn’t returned by evening. The little thrush was bored and she quietly pushed the door open and went out.

As long as the person was not a grotesque-looking demon, he or she will not be too ugly when transformed into a human. The little thrush was already beautiful when she was a bird. The transformed human figure was even more beautiful. From head to toe, she was full of spiritual qi, and her innocent eyes made people couldn’t help but feel tenderness toward her.

In the end, she was still afraid of people. She hid in the corner and looked at everything with curiosity. Who knew that a young master happened to drink a little too much, and she couldn't avoid bumping into him.

This young master saw the beautiful girl who was afraid and embarrassed, and he stopped. He didn’t know if it was because he’d drank too much, but he suddenly opened his mouth and said in a stunned voice, "You look so very beautiful, that you must be a celestial fairy.”

If it was another girl at this time, she would only laugh at him secretly. But he didn't know that he’d encountered a small thrush who knew nothing. She looked at him ignorantly, but still understood that the other person was complimenting her good appearance. But, she didn’t understand why.

This had been said many times when she was a thrush, but this was the first time it was said to her when she was a human. The young thrush was very happy and immediately felt great favor for the young master. But she soon saw the girl who’d raised her enter her room.

Anxious, she couldn't help but raise her skirt and turned to run.

Obviously, this young master had never seen such a timid girl working in a

painting boat. He stood stunned as he watched her run away before yelling, “I haven't asked the girl's name yet. My name is Meng Yun. I don't know if tomorrow—“

The little thrush had completely disappeared. The young master’s voice stopped. He shook his head and laughed, and then he raised his head up. He stood for a while and went home.

Soon after, everything seemed to flow naturally and smoothly.

After the little thrush turned back into a bird, she still remembered the young master. Her ear was very smart. She heard the young master’s name that day and heard him say "Tomorrow". She hopped around in her bird cage. Every day, once the girl left, she would transform into a human figure to meet with Meng Yun.

No one noticed the abnormality, and Meng Yun always thought that she was a new girl in the pleasure boat. He was accustomed to beauties, but when faced with the small thrush, he spoke freely and easily. He drank and would say anything when drunk.

The girls he met on a daily basis were long-term, experienced workers. They knew who spoke with a sincere heart and who was simply drunk sweet talking. But the little thrush was different. The little thrush took him seriously when he was drunk.

Things like feelings always came suddenly and out of control. One day, the little thrush heard Meng Yun said with a smile that he was about to get married. It was then that she suddenly realized that her heart had changed.

The more the little thrush touched the outside world, the more she knew, particularly when in places like the pleasure boats. What she couldn’t understand, she would ask. She carefully asked, "Can you not get married?"

For her sake, could he not get married?

She failed to ask the following sentence because Meng Yun quickly

answered her first question. "The date had already been set, and soon I'll be very busy and won't be able to come here every day anymore. Qingqing, you've been very good to me. If you lack money, you can just send someone to the Meng Manor to look for me."

The thrush frowned when she saw Meng Yun's firmness. She knew that she couldn't persuade him. There was no way for Meng Yun to change his mind.

Meng Yun had told her previously that he wanted an educated, well-balanced, and virtuous wife. When she saw that Meng Yun loved to linger with beauties every day, she thought he was joking, but who knew...

She responded dully and watched as Meng Yun hurried away, her eyes hesitant.

After two days of silence, the little thrush finally made up her mind and left the pleasure boat.

For the first time, the little thrush went to make trouble.

For Meng Yun, she went to find trouble with his fiancee, ultimately causing quite a stir, but was unable to make any difference.

Who could really value a girl that came out of a pleasure boat? Under the pressure of several parties, Meng Yun had to rebuke the small thrush in front of everyone and force her out.

The small thrush held back her tears, watching Meng Yun leave without turning back, watching Meng Yun finally get married and drew the eyebrows of another woman. Her heart twisted and finally went astray.

The reason why she was unable to cause anymore trouble was because the person from the Undead City took her away.

"Don't wander in this world and go with me to the Undead City. There, you will be very happy."

"Will I be happy…?" asked the little thrush a hundred years ago, "All my happiness now is tied to that person. In the Undead City...will I really find happiness there? "

"Was I happy…?" murmured Madam Meng a hundred years later. “It was all fake...I’d escaped from the Undead City, found his reincarnation. In order for me to be with him, I even created so many sins ... "

She had the mark of the Undead City in her body. As long as she was a demon, the Undead City could find her by following its imprint. In order to leave the Undead City, she didn’t hesitate to abandon her long life, in exchange for only a few years. In order to get rid of her demon body, she didn’t hesitate to do business with the devil, which suppressed her original body. In return, she sought food for the devil.

How many sins had she committed in these years? Countless. But she finally shaped herself into the image of Meng Yun's most desired wife, and she finally became Meng Yun's close companion in this life and shared his pillow…

But, she still couldn't be satisfied and still couldn't be happy.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 50.2

Once she hoped to marry Meng Yun, now she hoped that Meng Yun could belong to her completely.

"Why do you always go to those places...You have always been like this." Madam Meng finally grabbed the remaining half of the scroll. But half of the woman’s body in the painting was already burnt by the fire. Madam Meng tugged tightly at the scroll, feeling pained and desperate. "Won’t it be good to enter the painting with me? There, it’ll be only two of us. We’ll have eternal peace and never be separated again..."

Although Madam Meng had abandoned her demon body, she could still sense that Tao Hua’er, the woman in the pleasure boat, wasn’t an ordinary person. Her paintings had an inexplicable power. So, she went to ask for a painting, got it, and coupled with what she’d learned in the Undead City, it was not difficult for her to trap them inside the painting forever. It wasn’t difficult, but unfortunately...a stumbling block emerged halfway through. And now, all was ruined.

Madam Meng screamed hoarsely. The half of the picture scroll suddenly brightened. A ray of light enveloped her whole body. Madam Meng's figure gradually shrank, and she was swallowed into the painting.

Meng Yun looked on with shock, finally realizing what the painting was. They’d been a pair of husband and wife for several years, and his feelings were not shallow. He abandoned his fear and ignored Shen Zhixian’s obstruction. He flung himself forward to pick up the remaining half of the painting.

But that half of the painting was still burning. A small shadow of a bird suddenly appeared, soon to be enveloped by the fire.

Meng Yun rushed over, regardless of the fire. He quickly patted the scroll painting and tried to extinguish the fire. But the scroll painting was stained with wine, and soon it burned, leaving only ashes. When the wind blew, the ashes were blown up, and the figure of Madam Meng loomed in the light smoke. The shape of a little bird floated in mid-air, watching him quietly.

"Qing ... Qing Qing?" Meng Yun stretched out his hand blankly to touch the shadow. But a gust of wind blew through, completely dispersing the shadow.

"Where is she? Where's my wife?" Meng Yun stared blankly for a moment, then turned his head to question.

As Shen Zhixian was about to speak, Frost Return violently shook. His face shifted, and he turned decisively toward Yan Jin, saying, "Send out Meng Yun, along with anyone still in the residence."

Then, he looked toward the direction where that small courtyard lay, his expression grave. "That thing is coming out."

They didn't know anything about this devil. But, Shen Zhixian intended to go and see for himself. Meanwhile, Yan Jin could rescue everyone in the residence first. However, Yan Jin didn't seem too keen on this idea. Shen Zhixian ordered again, with a frown, and only then did Yan Jin reluctantly leave with a struggling Meng Yun.

Shen Zhixian released a breath, stood up, and hurried to the small courtyard. The lock had cracked but the rune remaining on the seal was still functioning. With his sword, Shen Zhixian shattered the lock into powder.

The surging aura suddenly stagnated.

Shen Zhixian kicked opened the crumbling wooden door, protected himself with an spell, and broke into the room.

The inside was full of black smoke, dark and murky. It was full of corpses, most of which looked like little demons. A thick, almost substantial black qi traveled across the ground, transforming into various shapes and making hoarse, terrifying roar.

This was probably the fiend that Madam Meng had made a deal with. Shen Zhixian saw the entire cloud of black qi roiled about and didn't dare underestimate it. Instead, he watched it cautiously.

Shen Zhixian had already guessed the Madam Meng had separated her demon body from her human body. The thrush bird was actually her demon body. He thought about the little thrush crawling out of the yard...It was done by Madam Meng and this fiend. Their deal was likely that she would look for food for the fiend and, in return, the fiend would control her demon body for her.

Frost Return seemed excited and desperate to engage. The sword spirit also showed signs of awakening. Shen Zhixian clenched the sword tightly and took a deep breath. His wrist moved and the sword was finally satisfied as it slashed toward the black qi.

The sword aura was bitingly cold. The fiend seemed to be aware of it and suddenly drew back, making a noise that sounded like hot water boiling and bubbling.

This was Shen Zhixian's first actual combat since transmigrating into the book. Even though he had a lot of memory in his mind and he'd practiced sword play with Yan Jin, this was different. He thought that it would take a while for him to adapt. However, after unsheathing the sword, his movements were very natural, with no sense of unfamiliarity.

There was some confusion in Shen Zhixian's heart, but he soon became distracted by the fiend.

Although Shen Zhixian didn't know much about this fiend, he knew that its strength was not weak and that it can, in fact, be considered quite

formidable. Meanwhile, Shen Zhixian had been plagued by his heart ailment for a long time. Although his cultivation stage still hadn't changed, his spiritual power was unable to sustain it. He didn't know how long he would last.

Meanwhile, per Shen Zhixian's order, Yan Jin took Meng Yun away and, fearing that Shen Zhixian would lose his life and worried that Meng Yun would make a lot of noise and shock others, he could only throw him into the pleasure boat for the painted skin demon to watch over. Only then did he hurried back as fast as he could.

Before entering the manor, he activated the formation they'd originally set up around the residence. Now, no one could enter and leave at will.

With these delays, a quarter of an hour had already passed. Following the contract within his spiritual sea, Yan Jin found Shen Zhixian, who was in the middle of a one-on-one battle with the fiend. Without uttering a single word, Yan Jin pulled out his sword and entered the battle.

The two of them were of the same mind and had the same heart. When they joined forces, they hardly needed to second guess each other. When Shen Zhixian's sword trembled, Yan Jin knew what sword move he was going to use. Without hesitation, his sword moved to cover any possible flaws, blocking the fiend's escape.

Under their combined efforts, the fiend could only suffer. In these two days, the moonlight was weak and the spiritual qi was thin. Normally, the little thrush bird would look for food for it, but it didn't know where the little demon went. Instead, two very fierce little humans had broken in and interrupted it's rest.

The fiend was furious. Knowing that it was not seriously injured, it feared that it might yet suffer more. It roared hoarsely and the black qi around it suddenly increased as it sucked in the spiritual qi around it.

There were actually some spiritual qi left in the bones scattered around it. It'd been left behind as a snack for the fiend to crunch on with its fangs. At

this time, it had no choice but to suck them in all at once and swallow them, squeezing out the last trace of spiritual qi.

Shen Zhixian noticed that things were not good and yelled, “Retreat!”

But, his warning came too late. The moment the fiend swallowed all the bones, it suddenly burst into great power. Brandishing its fangs and claws, it rushed toward them!

Its spiritual blast was too strong and too powerful. At that moment, Shen Zhixian knew that neither he nor Yan Jin could escape unscathed--What was this?! So powerful!

Yan Jin was next to him. If Shen Zhixian stepped back, the fiend would surely hurt Yan Jin.

As he thought this, Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth. Gathering spiritual power into his sword, he pushed Yan Jin back and prepared to face the fiend’s attack alone. However, in that instant, Yan Jin not only did not listen to him, but he took a step forward. Slashing his sword with an unyielding spiritual power, he took the lead in facing the fiend!

The two powerful forces collided. The collision crushed through the entire courtyard. The brick walls shattered one after another as the surrounding courtyard walls were razed to the ground. The residual force flattened the flowers and trees outside, even uprooting a few locust trees. They fell to the ground with a crash, revealing the countless skeletons underneath.

Yan Jin was forced take a step back. On his own, he won't be able to resist the fiend’s power. Shen Zhixian pressed one hand on his back and transferred spiritual power to him.

As soon as his spiritual power passed to Yan Jin’s body, Shen Zhixian sensed that Yan Jin’s state was not good. His qi and blood were in chaos, and his meridians had reversed. He was seriously injured. Shen Zhixian’s heart tightened. Slashing his sword in a half circle, he worked together with Yan Jin to knock the fiend back.

The fiend had forcibly strengthened itself, but this sudden burst of strength only lasted for a short time. Although it’d managed to hurt Yan Jin, it soon realized that things wouldn’t turn out so well. The black qi that it’d frantically raised with such difficulties had now been halved by Yan Jin.

It was furious but it dare not delay. While the two of them were preoccupied, it quickly slipped into the ground and disappeared within moments, leaving behind only a resentful and hateful roar the reverberated through the soil. “Ignorant children! Very good!”

His voice was hoarse and mocking, sounding extremely ugly.

Shen Zhixian almost laughed at him. This fiend was not a gopher but had managed to punch a tunnel into the ground.

However, Yan Jin was injured, and he wouldn’t feel at ease leaving Yan Jin behind to chase the monster. He could only stay behind and set up a barrier to protect Yan Jin. Helping him sit, Shen Zhixian immediately used spiritual power to help him regulate the chaos in his body.

Yan Jin’s injury was not light. After adjusting his breath for a while, he gasped and coughed up a little blood. It brought a little relief, but he was still very pale.

He sat leaning on Shen Zhixian, his expression tired, a rare gesture of weakness. Shen Zhixian also wanted to pass on more spiritual power to him, but he refused, and said in a low voice, "I'm fine. Is Sui Xian okay?"

Even though Shen Zhixian received half of the fish scale to protect his heart, he still had hidden worries. In contrast, Yan Jin was even more worried that this fight would cause Shen Zhixian to have another heart attack.

Shen Zhixian's heart was flowing hot. He smiled at him, his eyes warm, and he whispered, "I'm fine."

He half-hugged Yan Jin for a while, then helped him stand up. "This place is too chaotic. It’s not suitable for healing. Let’s go back to the pleasure boat.”

The formation outside Meng Manor was still in place. There was only a small flaw, which was probably destroyed when the fiend escaped. Shen Zhixian replenished it to prevent the remaining spiritual energy from flowing out, and then they slowly returned to pleasure boat.

Inside the pleasure boat, the painted skin demon was dealing with Meng Yun, who was freaking out. When they came back, she was too busy to take them into consideration and only gave them a meaningful glance, signaling for them to quickly leave.

They quietly avoided Meng Yun and searched for a vacant room.

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The fiend didn't return and Yangzhou was very peaceful for several days.

Meng Yun probably finally understood what was happening and his whole temperament changed.

He could no longer enter nor live inside Meng Manor. Fortunately, he had other places to live in. Meanwhile, the painted skin demon advised him to reorganize his new home, resettle his people, and strive to minimize the impact of this incident.

Yan Jin retreated behind closed doors to heal his injury, and Shen Zhixian went alone to clean up the follow-up matters within Meng Manor.

The several locust trees by the courtyard all fell down and fell into ruin overnight. The leaves had shedded and the roots withered. Shen Zhixian saw the deep pit left behind by the trees and, within it, were a mixture of bones and broken wooden seals. He took a deep breath and sighed. Locust trees were considered ghost trees. It had very heavy yin energy, attracting both ghosts and souls. As a result, using locust to attract spirits

resulted in half the work and twice the reward.

Even though the thrush can be considered a pitiful demon, pitiful creatures still had hatred. She had killed countless souls for her own selfish desires, and so it wasn’t too much to end her life.

Because the creatures within the courtyard had died in terrible circumstances and was suppressed by the fiend for a long time, Shen Zhixian was afraid that their grievances might be too strong, resulting in danger. He cleanse the area with fire and chant an incantation to calm the souls and guide them to the afterlife. After five to six days of busy work, it was finally finished.

It was a cloudy day when they left the pleasure boat. The pleasure boat was closed during the day, and the servants and pleasure girls were resting in their rooms. Only the painted skin demon sang a gentle song on stage.

There was no one in the audience.

Shen Zhixian stopped to listen to her sing.

“...the sound of drums had not yet ended, disturbing your noon daydreams and causing you to sober up, listening to the show. Removing my makeup before a bronze mirror, sighing long and short. The curtains dropped, and everyone scattered. But, who would love me truly…”

The painted skin demon had changed her face again. Swaying her long sleeves and holding an orchid between her fingers, she sang beautifully. The painted skin demon had always been reluctant to enter the Undead City. She’d said that it was a place that allowed people to indulge in their fantasies. But still, she preferred to live in this earthly world.

Even if one day she died, it could be considered a happy one.

Shen Zhixian didn't bother her. After stopping to listen to her sing for a while, he quietly walked away with Yan Jin.

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After leaving Yangzhou, they were not in a hurry to find the Undead City. On the surface, Yan Jin supposedly left the sect to practice. But, in truth, he hadn’t experienced many problems.

Although Yan Jin practiced diligently every day, it was still not enough. His actual combat experience was too little, and when he really had to fight against others, he would undoubtedly suffer.

Shen Zhixian gave the final word. "I’m not in a hurry to find the Undead City. Let’s find some secret place to make a breakthrough." After having gained a general understanding of it through the thrush and the painted skin demon, he knew that the Undead City was not a simple place. They first must improve their own strengths.

There were 13 stages of cultivation in this world. Shen Zhixian reached the tenth level before suffering from heart ailment. Despite being a supposed genius, his spiritual power could no longer be sustained for long and so he could not cultivate any higher.

Yan Jin was no less inferior. He had just risen to the first level in the early period. At this time, he was only one level lower than Shen Zhixian. His spiritual power was still pure and full, waiting to be hone.

Secret realms like the one with the ancient merman were hard to find. However, there were surprisingly many common, little secret realms. They went to experience a few in succession. Shen Zhixian’s cultivation stage had insufficient spiritual power. As a result, he focused on absorbing spiritual qi. Meanwhile, Yan Jin focused on fighting fierce demon beasts. These actual combat experiences allow him to make rapid progress.

The environment within the secret realm was difficult. Fortunately, they were not afraid of hardship. In this way, they practiced for half a year. As a result, their cultivation made qualitative leaps.

After coming out of the secret realm, Shen Zhixian looked to the left, then

the right. With a lazy stretch that was neither elegant nor graceful, he said with a smile: "We’re finally out. After fasting for such a long time, I’ve been craving for some good food. Let’s find a big city and have a delicious meal…”

With laughter in his eyes, Yan Jin murmured “mnn” and selected a general direction.

After coming out of the secret realm, they stopped by a remote place and turned toward the right path.

But they hadn’t walked for even a quarter of an hour, when five to six youth suddenly jumped out of the roadside forest, brandishing their swords, and surrounded them firmly.

Shen Zhixian looked at them subtly, looked at their postures, and waited for them to start the classic dialogues of robbery.

They stood still, and the leader finally said, "Brazen, viocious disciple! You’ve harmed countless people. Today, we’ll take the place of the Heavenly Dao and get rid of evil!”

His sword swayed and he launched at them.

Xixi: Sorry for the late post. I recently finished watching *The Untamed* (so so good, I love it!) and just had to finish binge-reading the novel *The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation*, on which it was based on. So, that's why this post is late.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 51

They’d been closed off in the secret realm for nearly half a year. Therefore, it was odd why they would suddenly be blocked by someone.

Shen Zhixian flicked his sleeves, and his invisible qi energy smashed against young men’s swords, knocking them together.

The youths were forced to take several steps backward and break apart to avoid accidentally injuring one another.

Shen Zhixian smoothed his sleeves casually. “Speak properly. I don't like to be pointed at by swords."

The youths apparently didn’t expect their opponents to be so powerful. After their strategic formation was so pathetically and easily broken apart, they dare not take it lightly anymore. They carefully regrouped and looked at the two with vigilance.

The young man wearing a blue robe was the first to speak. His sword flitted between Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin, before finally settling on Yan Jin. "Are you Yan Jin?"

Yan Jin calmly said, "Yes."

The young man sternly said, "That’s you, all right. You’ve been fooling around for more than half a year, causing countless harms. Your crimes are many. Today, we’ve finally found you. If you still have a conscience, hand yourself over..."

Shen Zhixian, "????? "

What’s going on? For the past six months, they’d been cultivating, eating and drinking in the secret realms. Who could they provoke?

With his chin slightly raised towards Yan Jin, he smoothly interrupted the youth’s words, saying doubtfully, "Him? Are you sure?"

This group of youths seemed to be no older than sixteen to seventeen years old. This was the first time they were face to face with a infamous, serial murderer. As a result, they were naturally nervous.

Because of this, the young man in blue couldn’t help but be somewhat suppressed by Shen Zhixian’s calm. When Shen Zhixian asked the question, he paused and subconsciously looked at Yan Jin again, just to be sure. “It’s him all right.”

He took a deep breath and counted Yan Jin’s crimes without a pause, “Five months ago, he killed a villager in Northwest County and a girl in Pinghe Town...Three months ago, he murdered a junior disciple named Yi Ming from the Yunxiao Sect ... "

In the end, there were dozens of lives taken, many of them disciples from various sects.

After the young man finished speaking, there was silence all around as everyone looked at each other for a while. Shen Zhixian came back to his senses and asked slowly, "You mean, someone who looks exactly like him is harming people everywhere?"

The young man in blue said, "Yes...No. What do you mean, look exactly the same? Do you want to deny it?"

Shen Zhixian slowly furrowed his eyebrows.

Why was this scene so familiar?

He almost instantly remembered the countless "Yan Jin" in the secret realm, which were illusions fabricated by the secret realm to coax him to stay. But now that the secret realm had completely disappeared, why were there more “Yan Jins” here?

Seeing that they had nothing to say, the group of youths thought the two could no longer denied it and began to encircle them in a threatening manner.

Shen Zhixian said, "It's true. We spent about half a year in a secret place. We don’t know much about the outside world so you can just carefully talk to us. What’s going on?"

The youth in blue hesitated, "This ... "

Shen Zhixian looked like someone with a mild temperament. Moreover, he also didn’t look like he was lying. The group of youths watched him, noticing that he seemed to sincerely not know anything. This shook their resolve. The youth in blue said suspiciously, “You really don’t know?”

“Senior Brother Yuan, don't believe him! That Yan Jin has been evil for a long time. He must be a treacherous and cunning man. I’m afraid that he’s just pulling some tricks.”

Another slender youth saw that everyone was hesitating. He pulled out a sword and directly pointed it at Yan Jin, saying hatefully, “All my life, I’ve hated people like you who willfully slaughter others. Others may believe your conniving words, but I don’t!”

The skinny youth’s status was obviously not low in their group. The moment he said this, the other youths’ fighting spirit were once again roused up.

The young man in blue held up one hand to stop their movements. He wanted to investigate some more. Moreover, they’d never actually seen Yan Jin kill anyone and were basing their opinions on hearsay. They’d only heard the elders spoke of it and seen what vaguely appeared to be Yan Jin’s

face recorded by an illusion stone. Yet, they believed it unwittingly…

--Wait, someone had seen Yan Jin kill!

He turned around to the youth next to him. "Junior Brother A’Lin. Two months ago, on that night, you stumbled upon Jin Yan harming the town’s people. Do you recognize and identify that this is him?"

The A’Lin he’d called was a heavyset and stout disciple who looked simple and honest. His courage also seemed a bit small. When asked about that night, he began to stammer, "I, he ... Yes, he looks like him... "

God knew that night had been like a nightmare to him for the past two months! He just got up at night to empty his bladder. Who knew that he would come upon a murder scene? Even if he forgot the murderer, he could never forget how the murderer instantly sucked the energy right out of that person until he became a dried corpse...Ahhh, so terrifying!

He was notoriously timid, and when he saw such a scene in the middle of the night, he was very frightened. It wasn’t until the murderer had dropped the corpse that he remembered to shout for help.

He didn't see exactly what the murderer looked like, only vaguely noticing that it was a man in black. It wasn’t until the next day, when an elder cultivator surveyed the site and asserted that it was Yan Jin’s doing, did he realize who he’d ran into.

The young man in blue saw his hesitancy. His mouth pursed helplessly, somewhat hating iron for not becoming steel.

Shen Zhixian saw this and took the opportunity to ask, "Regarding this person you’re talking about, how was he dressed, what weapons did he use, were you alone, did you say anything, who determined that Yan Jin was the murderer, what were the evidence…”

He asked many questions in a row that the young man in blue could only gape speechlessly

Shen Zhixian looked at their speechless appearance and understood what was going on. He smiled and said, "Young people must understand what's right and what's wrong. Don't just accuse others and create fierce rumors. You also shouldn't be fooled by tigers...Well, don't make trouble now. We have more important things to do so please make way."

However, the young man in the blue robe tightly held the hilt of his sword and refused to let them go. "Who are you? Qingyun Sect had released a search and arrest warrant, asking for Yan Jin to be brought back to be questioned. This is only fair for everyone. If you say you're innocent, then go with us to Qingyun Sect and let the sect leader determine the truth."

....

After undergoing several negotiations, Shen Zhixian finally promised that they'll go with the group of youths to Qingyun Sect.

In fact, it would be quite easy to get away from them. But, the situation was rather strange. From the youth's meaning, these murders seemed to have caused a lot of chaos outside, resulting in Qingyun Sect issuing an emergency warrant for Yan Jin to be captured and taken back.

Shen Zhixian was also willing to go with them. These young men were disciples who came out of the Xiaozong Sect. They were very young, yet were already full of chivalry and a strong sense of justice, punishing evil and promoting good, and were not deeply involved in the world. Shen Zhixian also intended to find out a little more information from them.

He had a gentle appearance and an easy-going attitude. It was easy for him to make other people drop their guards. He also had good interpersonal skills, ensuring that youngsters were unaware of any hidden traps. He walked with them for half a day, only avoiding the youth who claimed to hate those who kill innocent people. That latter was too deeply guarded. Meanwhile, he was able to soften the other disciples' attitudes by quite a lot.

After communicating with them, Shen Zhixian learned a lot.

About half a year ago, a man in black who looked exactly like Yan Jin had begun to cause chaos, killing many innocent people.

At first, no one cared. After all, it was only ordinary people who died, and they could not afford to make any troubles. Until, five to six sect disciples died.

This caused an immediate sensation. The sect suddenly lost a few excellent disciples and was furious. They offered a reward for the murderer’s capture.

No one knew who he was, until a senior disciple from Qingyun Sect recognized that it was Yan Jin, who’d seemed to have quietly disappeared.

At first, when it became known that he was a disciple of Qingyun Sect, everyone couldn’t believe it. After all, Qingyun Sect was quite famous in the cultivation realm and was known as one of the top sects. How could it have taught such a disciple?

However, tragedies continued to pile up one after another, until it became clear that the culprit was the same person. As a result, more and more people began to spread the rumor that Yan Jin was the murderer.

An illusion stone could project a short recording, and it projected the murderer wearing black clothes and clutching a sword. He wore a cold expression on his face, which looked exactly the same as Yan Jin from the Qingyun Sect.

No one could tolerate this. The victimized sects were full of injustice and rushed to Qingyun Sect to ask for an explanation.

However, Yan Jin had already left for a long time, and Shen Zhixian had also been in retreat for a long time. As a result, Song Ming had no choice but to discuss the issue with several other elders. He ultimately issued an emergency warrant and asked that Yan Jin come back quickly to give everyone a statement.

All these things were full of drama.

In fact, these youths were initially suspicious of this matter. But they could only acquiesce under their leader’s decisive judgement. Moreover, they’d seen the so-called illusion stone, which appeared to confirm this hypothesis.

But now, after Shen Zhixian had asked his series of questions, they once again felt hesitant.

Yu Yuan briefly discussed the issue with his brothers and sisters. He felt that they couldn't solve the problem by themselves. So he decided to send the two people back to Qingyun Sect for the elders to deal with.

The youths were eager to know the truth and have been traveling diligently these past few days. Shen Zhixian followed them with a bright attitude, but secretly pondered other thoughts.

Today, once night descended, everyone stopped to rest. However, there was no village, no town, nor any shelter nearby for them to rest in. They had no choice but to rest in the forest.

Of course, each of them had their own dinner. The youths ate dry rations. Yan Jin caught a passing hare, silently roasted it, and tore off the fattest part for Shen Zhixian to eat.

The youths were not far away from them, so they could smell the delicious fragrance. They stopped talking and couldn’t help themselves from their heads to look at them.

However, Shen Zhixian ignored them. As he and Yan Jin ate the little hare, he said quietly, "Let’s not rush back. Let Song Ming have a headache. We have to figure this out ourselves."

On the surface, Song Ming may appear like a good sect leader, but in his heart, he was not good to them. There were still many mysteries that Shen Zhixian still hadn’t figured out yet. He couldn’t completely rely on him.

Who knew if he should take advantage of this? Or, whether this was a trick or not?

Yan Yin let out a sound of agreement. He saw that Shen Zhixian’s lips were stained with oil and wiped then with a handkerchief.

Shen Zhixian filled his belly under the youths vaguely grumbling gaze. Turning his neck, he said with a smile, “Tired.”

Yan Jin silently cleaned up the mess and applied a cleansing technique to clean them up. After a while, Shen Zhixian leaned familiarly on him and closed his eyes. Yan Jin’s arm encircled him and he also closed his eyes, not caring about the young men’s vague and curious gazes.

The night was dark. Seeing that the two had no intention of being vigilant, the blue-robed young man named Yu Yuan frowned and arranged for several lookouts to rotate, saying, "Watch them carefully. Don't make any mistakes."

Several youths answered. One of them looked curiously at the two “intimate” people. “What is the relationship between them? Their relationship seemed to be very good.”

The white-clad man named Sui Xian had said that they were brothers, but what kind of brothers would act so intimately? They even saw Yan Jin finishing Sui Xian’s meat, uncaring that he’d taken a few bites already.

"Who knows."

The youths were all full of energy and weren’t sleepy. Someone said a few words and started a quiet discussion. The topic was nothing more than the two over there.

Although their voices were quiet, their conversations still fell clearly into Shen Zhixian's ears. Shen Zhixian didn't mind their guessing about his and Yan Jin’s relationship. But he really was tired and couldn't sleep because of their talking. He sighed and murmured without opening his eyes, “These

young men are really energetic."

Yan Jin shifted slightly, letting Shen Zhixian adjust to a more comfortable position.

Shen Zhixian used his shoulder as a pillow and, in the next moment, a warm palm covered his ear, which blocked out the buzzing from the group of bees over there.

With his ears blocked, silence descended.

Shen Zhixian smiled with satisfaction and leaned on Yan Jin to fall asleep comfortably.

The teenagers who'd been paying attention to the situation over there: "..."

The discussion grew quiet for a moment. Before they could start again, they saw Yan Jin looking at them, his eyes extremely chilly.

His eyes were like shards of ice, piercing them.

Their mouths immediately snapped shut. Feeling the sudden, bitter chill, as if shooting them straight in the heart, they couldn't help but settle down.

Seeing that they were finally quiet, Yan Jin retrieved his gaze.

The newly thawed youths closed their mouths and were so frozen that they no longer wanted to continue the discussion. They quietly dispersed, some setting up watch while others meditated in rest.

There was a moment of silence. Half an hour later, the young man named A'Lin suddenly stood up, scratched his head in embarrassment, and whispered, "I, I urgently need to..."

It was Yu Yuan who was guarding in the middle of the night. He nodded and said "Be careful", and watched as A'Lin rushed away.

They had encountered no danger in these four weeks. Yu Yuan didn't worry too much, and quickly recovered his sight.

A’Lin returned after about two quarters of an hour. When he returned, his face was pale, his steps a bit heavy. He saw Yi Yuan’s frown and quickly said, "Maybe it’s because I’ve been eating dry food for two days, and my stomach is upset. I just squat…Squatting until my legs went numb... ” He scratched his head in shame, revealing a smirk.

Yu Yuan frowned and looked at him for a while, vaguely sensing that something was off. But he couldn’t figure out what was wrong. He whispered, "Then you meditate and rest for a while. I'll take your night shift for you."

A’Lin answered gratefully, and soon returned to his original position, meditating with her eyes closed. He looked the same as before.

The night passed quietly.

They continued to travel quickly the next day.

Several youths, including Yu Yuan, were too young and inexperienced. They hadn’t seen anything wrong with Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin for the past few days. They’d also never seen Yan Jin harm anyone in person. Their originally tight nerves gradually relaxed, and only the thin young Lin Qin at the beginning continued to guard against them.

When one youth saw his cold face, he whispered, “They don’t seem to be hostile. Maybe there’s something secretive going on. When we get to Qingyun Sect…”

"The heart can differ from the outward appearance." Lin Qin interrupted his words coldly, glanced at Yan Jin, and did not suppress his suspicion at all. He pointed out, "Don't take it lightly, lest you suffer. "

The young man felt like he’d been pricked. Feeling the other’s disapproval, he no longer wanted to talk to him and instead reached out to pull on A’Lin.

“Hey, Junior Brother A’Lin, you say it carefully again. What was the situation that night?”

A’Lin had been silent since that morning. He’d been walking silently when he was suddenly grabbed. He slowly turned to look at the youth, his face as pale as snow, which scared the other youth into letting go.

"Junior Brother A’Lin, what's the matter with you?"

A’Lin’s face was completely bloodless, and the two black eyes slowly shifted over. He slowly said, "I'm fine, but last night, I got sick from eating food and stomach hurts."

The teenager listened to A’Lin explain that he just had a bad stomach and was relieved. He took the initiative to stretch out his hand. "And you’re still moving. Can I help you?"

"It's better now." A’Lin shook his head. He passed over his hand and put it on the other youth’s hand. "Do you want to hear what happened that night?"

"Mmn. But if you feel uncomfortable, don't talk about it." The youth carefully looked at his face, a little worried. "Your hands are cold."

"I’m okay... " He grinned but his face was too pale and his smile did not have the usual vigor. Instead, it seemed somewhat horrifying. The other youth suddenly felt a cold chill. A trace of something he couldn’t quite grasp flashed through his heart. It felt like a foreshadowing of something terrible to come.

He settled down, and when he looked at A’Lin again, there was nothing wrong. Everything appeared normal.

"I actually saw how the man in black killed..." A’Lin said dully.

He had never said this before, and youths all turned to look at him in suspicion. Yu Yuan asked, "What's the matter? Didn't you say that you were scared silly, and the surrounding was too dark so you didn’t see anything

clearly?" "

A’Lin shook her head, ignored Yu Yuan's question, and continued, "The man in black twisted his neck, then raised his hand, and suddenly punched it through the man's chest ..." He drew in a breath. "Then the man was drained ..."

"Hand?!"

"The wound was made by hand?"

A series of voices exclaimed one after another. This was new news. The man who died that day had his blood and spiritual qi completely sucked clean, leaving only a big hole in his chest. The sect leaders and elders investigated for a long time but couldn’t tell who kind of weapon was used. The murderer was...unarmed?

The youth who supported A’Lin couldn't believe it. "How can this be done?"

"Why can't it be done? Would you like to try it?" A’Lin glared at the youth, smiling faintly, as if he had just casually asked him if he wanted to drink water.

The youth froze. Try what--”

Before he could finish his words, he felt A’Lin tightly pinched his wrist, the grip like cold iron tongs. Then, from his chest came a cool sensation.

Something had completely punctured through his chest.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 52

No one expected this to suddenly happen. The youth never thought that A’Lin would act so suddenly. What’s more, their bodies were so close together that the youth was completely defenseless against him.

Shen Zhixian stood far away and neither he nor Yan Jin were paying attention to what they were doing. They only looked over when they heard strange movements, just in time to see a hand completely penetrate the youth’s chest before pulling back sharply.

The scene was terrible.

Yu Yuan was the first to react. He shouted A’Lin’s name sternly and took two steps forward, wanting to catch the murderous A’Lin.

But Yu Yuan had scruples and didn’t immediately pull out a sword. A’Lin didn’t have so much restraint. On his pale face, his lips hooked, revealing a smile full of evil humor. His bloody hand curled into claws and flashed toward Yu Yuan.

After witnessing the skill with which this claw can penetrate the chest, Yu Yuan didn't dare to take it lightly. He lifted his hand, unsheathed his sword, and blocked A’Lin’s offensive.

Seeing that he couldn't make a move, A’Lin didn’t continue with the battle. He ran away without saying a word.

Except for Yu Yuan and A’Lin, several other disciples surrounded the severely wounded youth. They anxiously tried to give him spiritual power

in an attempt to stop the bleeding. With a spasm in his throat, the youth vomited a bubble of blood, then he opened his eyes wide and let out a silent gasp.

With a single glance, Shen Zhixian could see that the youth could not be saved. When he noticed that A'Lin was running away, he instinctively tried to chase after him. But Yu Yuan stopped in front of him. "What do you intend to do?"

Yu Yuan heard his fellow disciples shouting for him, telling him the youth was dying. This all happened so suddenly, causing his stress level to dramatically rise. His hand holding the sword bulged with blue tendons. If one were to look carefully, one could see that his hand was also shaking.

Of course, he knew that Shen Zhixian wanted to chase after A'Lin. He also wanted to chase after him and wanted to ask what was going on. But the other disciples were here, and with Yan Jin here too, he couldn't feel rest assured.

...As for Yan Jin and this man, who knew if they will even return.

After so much delay, A'Lin's figure had already disappeared. When Shen Zhixian saw that he was gone, he pulled his gaze to the group of chaotic youths. He sighed and, with obvious compassion in his eyes, said, "No more chasing. You should look at your fellow disciples first. "

Yi Yuan saw that the two people really didn't intend to leave. Gritting his teeth, he re-sheathed his sword and hurried to the injured youth's side. Because he was kneeling on one knee, his attention fixed on the dying young man in front of him, he didn't notice that when Shen Zhixian turned around, he calmly flicked his fingertips.

There was a cluster of grass by the side of the road. When the strand of breeze blew across it, a half-finger blade of grass broke off. It floated a little, fluttered toward the ground, and disappeared silently in the direction that A'Lin had ran away.

Yu Yuan's hand paused for a long time on the side of the severely injured youth’s neck, which was gradually turning cold. The neck was motionless, the pulse there no longer jumping.

The other three disciples were originally calling out the youth’s name. But when they looked at Yu Yuan, they slowly stopped.

With red eyes, the junior disciple who’d had the best relationship with the dead youth said, “Senior Brother Yuan, he…”

Yu Yuan retracted his hand, his expression gloomy, and shook his head. "Pass a message to Master. Junior Brother Lin, I’ll trouble you to make a fire."

Their Master came from a sect that followed free and unconstrained pursuits. After death, they don't like to be trapped in the ground. Instead, they preferred to be cremated and set free in the world.

It took them an hour to make funeral arrangements.

The youths eyes were all red. No one expected that their first trek to gain experience would lead to such tragedy. They began with seven people, and now there were two missing.

After Yu Yuan calmed down a little, he began to think carefully. He first thought of the A’Lin from last night. A’Lin went off alone by himself due to his stomach issue and was obviously weaker when he returned.

A’Lin was famous for his timidity. Let alone killing a person, he’d had to be coerced to harm even a minor demon. And just now, that ruthless A’Lin….

He would rather believe that it was not the real A’Lin or that he was forced.

When Yu Yuan told everyone his speculation, all the youths showed incredulous looks.

Qin Lin frowned. "If that wasn’t Junior Brother Lin, then where’s the real

Junior Brother Lin? If he was forcibly taken away...But, we’re just disciples of a small sect. Who would go to such efforts?”

However, forcibly taking a small disciple away was truly as simple as eating and drinking. Even if they were to fight outright, things wouldn’t go too well for them. As things stand, even if they were well prepared, the failure rate was still extremely high. A’Lin had journeyed with them for a long time. In the light of day, they still couldn’t see any abnormalities in him. Therefore, the idea of him being kidnapped as part of a trap was minimal.

Yu Yuan also knew this too. He looked at Lin Qin and hesitated. "I want to go back to the forest area where we camped last night and take a look."

So everyone hurried back again. Shen Zhixian sighed. He didn’t say anything but merely followed slowly.

Yu Yuan said that he wanted to go back and see if there was anything wrong with the place where A’Lin went last night and to check for any unusual signs.

The fierce “A’Lin” was so cruel that the youths had very low expectations that the real A’Lin would still be alive. But, to their surprise, when they returned to the last camping spot, they actually saw the chubby, timid youth.

“A’Lin?” Yu Yuan blurted out. He almost walked over but he suddenly thought of what had just happened earlier and stopped short. He watched with vigilance at the youth with his head poking out from behind a tree. He said, "What are you hiding there for? Come out.”

The youth stretched out his head nervously, listening to Yu Yuan’s words with dismay. "Senior Brother Yuan, can you throw me some clothes first ..."

He stretched out his arm and shook it. The fluffy arm was naked, with no sleeves in sight. He quickly retracted his arm again. "I'm out of clothes ..."

After some time, A’Lin came out from behind the tree.

Yu Yuan's clothes were a little tight on him, making him feel uncomfortable. He clenched his teeth and pulled the belt to try and loosen it. Then, he gasped out, "Oh, I thought you guys didn't want me anymore!"

He was very timid so, last night, he didn't dare go too far. The surrounding area was dark and the moonlight was dim. He'd just untied his belt when he felt a flash of pain in his head, and then he passed out.

When he woke up again, the sun was shining on him through the leaves, gentle and warm—Eh? What happened to his clothes?!

The stunned A'Lin, wearing only a pair of underpants, jumped up in shock. Terrified, as if he'd seen a ghost, he rushed back to the place where everyone rested. But, when he got there, everyone was gone.

A'Lin was dumbfounded. At first, he thought that the other disciples were only playing a joke on him. Yet, even after looking around, no figures could be seen. Finally, he accepted the fact that he'd been thrown away.

Looking at his situation, he felt a little overwhelmed. He was wearing only a pair of underpants and had no idea who'd taken away his storage bag. He hesitated for a long time, but couldn't muster up the courage to leave. Fortunately, before he completely freaked out, he heard Senior Brother Yuan's voice.

A'Lin finished speaking and found that the others were silent. He looked at the people around him and noticed that one person was missing. "Where's Senior Brother Zhang? How come I didn't see him?"

Senior Brother Zhang was the young man who'd died.

Yu Yuan looked at him calmly and quietly, with a hint of self-blame in his eyes. "Junior Brother Zhang was killed."

He briefly explained what happened. A'Lin's eyes widened, and his body began to tremble. Each word that came out shook. "Zhang, Senior Brother

Zhang...pierced through the heart...two months ago…”

His words were muddled, but everyone still understood at once—the thing that A’Lin bumped into two months ago. The ordinary villager who died with a fist through the heart!

And, according to many senior cultivators, the murderer was Yan Jin!

Shen Zhixian felt their eyes brushed over to where he and Yan Jin stood. He narrowed his eyes slightly and carefully looked at A’Lin again. “When it happened, we were standing far away, beyond reach.”

Lin Qin stared at Yan Jin with eyes that only grew increasingly more doubtful. He slowly said, “How do we know that you don’t have a partner?”

.....

After the incident, the group of youths avoided Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin and quietly discussed the issue amongst themselves. Shen Zhixian was too lazy to inquire into their thoughts and ignored them altogether even when they looked over with suspicion.

After finding A’Lin in the forest that day, the other youths began to doubt him. It wasn’t until A’Lin almost cried and murmured a lot of things that only they knew, did their suspicion dispelled.

—At least on the surface, the youths seemed to have regained harmony.

However, whether it was intentional or not, the chances of A’Lin being avoided was simply too high. Sometimes when he chatted with other disciples, he couldn’t have said more than a few words before they pretended to casually change the topic and find other excuses to quietly move away from him.

After being shunned again by his fellow disciples, A’Lin stood in place, feeling at a loss with his fists clenched tight. After a moment, he relaxed his fists, as if he’d suddenly understood something.

He gradually became quieter, and no longer talked and laughed with everyone as usual.

The atmosphere once again dropped to a freezing point.

Shen Zhixian silently observed their performance. In fact, he could understand the youths' mentality. But even if he understood it, he still couldn't help but want to sigh. Look, people were always so strange. Earlier, when he'd said that Yan Jin was framed, the group of youths were not convinced. Now, this suspicion fell on their fellow disciple...

They'd even analyzed the possibility of A'Lin being possessed, and they continued to diligently searched for any proof of A'Lin's innocence.

In the end, this couldn't be helped. This group of youths had undergone a storm and, because they were inexperienced, they couldn't help but feel somewhat panicked. Regarding this matter, they were also a little biased. Shen Zhixian couldn't help himself and, after hesitating for a moment, still decided to be nosy.

He found an opportunity to have a tactful conversation with Yu Yuan, but happened to be overheard by Lin Qin.

In the past few days, this skinny youth had grown increasingly more hostile toward him and Yan Jin, often reminding everyone not to communicate with them. When he heard Shen Zhixian's words, his anger burst out and he snapped, "Who needed your good intentions? Who's to say that you're not manipulating things from behind the scene?..."

He hatefully added, "I blame you both. If not for you ... "

Whatever else he was going to say died away when Yu Yuan pulled his sleeve. After unwillingly stopping, he snorted angrily and began walking away.

After taking a few steps, he still couldn't help turning back to Yu Yuan and

said, "Senior Brother Yuan shouldn't believe him. He doesn’t have good intentions!"

Yu Yuan responded, sighed, and really didn't talk to Shen Zhixian any more. He walked away in silence.

Shen Zhixian suddenly felt a killing intent nearby. He turned his head to look at Yan Jin, just in time to see the flash of killing intent in his eyes before he could hide it.

"What's wrong?" He covered Yan Jin's five fingers with his sleeve and calmly sent out a bit of spiritual force.

"They scolded you." Yan Jin's voice was a little tight. He sternly repeated, "How dare they scold you..."

Shen Zhixian smiled, shook their clasped hands carelessly, and said without care, "After all, in their eyes, we’re the bad guy. I was prepared for it.”

"But you haven't done anything!"

Yan Jin seemed to be suppressing something. He squeezed Shen Zhixian's hand for a moment, before immediately relaxing his grip. He said quietly, "No matter what, let's go find the Undead City, okay?"

Shen Zhixian saw that Yan Jin’s mood seemed to be bad. He made a faint hum. "It’s obvious that someone is framing you. The longer we take to discover the truth, the worse your reputation will be and the more the rumors will spread. We need to take this seriously…”

Yan Jin said, "It doesn’t matter to me.”

Shen Zhixian, " ..... "

He hesitated for a while. After thinking carefully, he said, "A’jin, were you thinking about resolving this quietly?”

Shen Zhixuan spoke very tactfully. In fact, he wanted to directly ask Yan Jin if he was planning to quietly find the person creating all the rumors and resolve it with violence.

Thanks to the blessing of the contract, he could clearly feel the killing intent in Yan Jin's heart. It was like boiling water, incessantly grumbling and roiling.

Yan Jin didn’t say anything.

After watching his reaction, Shen Zhixian knew that his guess was correct. He seriously said, "No, there are many ways to solve this. That is the worst way ... If you have any ideas, you must tell me first. Don't let yourself do things quietly. "

The cultivator who repeatedly murder without care will recieve retribution. He didn’t want Yan Jin risk his future prospects. Although he knew that Yan Jin was the protagonist in this world and will most likely not meet with any mishaps...he still didn’t want to see Yan Jin undergo any suffering.

Yan Jin lowered his eyes and said in a low voice, "But I don't want their words to dirty your ears."

Shen Zhixian pursed his lips and tilted his head to see that the group of youths weren’t paying attention to them. He suddenly stopped and turned to hug Yan Jin. After hugging Yan Jin, he whispered something in his ear.

He spoke quickly. But, as soon as he was done, he quickly let go of Yan Jin. He coughed as if nothing had happened and continued to move forward.

Yan Jin's eyes brightened slightly. He thought for a while and whispered, "Can it be every day?"

"No." Shen Zhixian pretended to be calm. When he felt the killing intent from within the contract retreating like a tide, he couldn't help but relax. With his voice lowered, he spoke as if he was coaxing a child. "It depends on whether you are good or not."

They bantered leisurely. Meanwhile, as they continued to rush day after day, the youths’ moods did not ease and became increasingly more anxious.

Even Shen Zhixian bending down to pick up a blade of grass would attract their guarded eyes.

When Shen Zhixian saw them looking over, he held up the grass and said to Yan Jin with a smile, "Look, it has a clear vein and a beautiful shape. What a lovely blade of grass."

The youths looked at him for a long time in silence before turning back.

When Shen Zhixian saw them turning their heads away, he moved his fingertips and turned the dark green blade of grass over, revealing the back —the green leaves were stained with something so fine that, if one were not looking carefully, one might not even notice it.

Black ash.

“Puppet Wood ash,” Shen Zhixian looked at Yan Jin and mouthed. His smile gradually faded.

This was the small blade of grass he’d sent after the retreating “A’Lin.” As long as it wasn’t too far away, he could sense the small blade’s position.

There hadn’t been any news a few days ago. However, yesterday, he began to feel that the blade of grass was not far away, and today he finally found it.

Nevertheless, it was only a blade of grass and not the person himself.

Maybe...that "A’Lin" was not even human at all.

"A’jin." Shen Zhixian whispered softly, "I don't think this matter with A’Lin is over quite yet."

His hunch was right. This wasn’t the end.

The next day, they travelled quickly, and after half an hour, they entered the domain of a small cultivation sect.

The youths belonged to a sect called Yuanming Sect. This small sect, however, was called the Qiongyu Sect. To be honest, these sects were so little known that Shen Zhixian hadn’t even heard of these two names.

The youths, whose faces had been dark for several days, finally displayed a rare smile. This was because their Master was very familiar with this sect.

The town under the little sect was very lively, and everyone's face was full of smiles. The youths entered the town and asked around before they discovered that, in two days, Qiongyu Set would hold a companion ceremony for the sect leader’s inheriting disciple and his junior sister.

Yu Yuan's Master and Qiongyu Sect had deep ties and a lot of contacts. Since they’ve came, the youths also have no reason not to congratulate them.

However, because of Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin, this visit seemed a bit troublesome. Yu Yuan didn’t think it would be a good idea to take the two people up the mountain directly, but he didn’t feel at ease leaving behind his fellow disciples. Therefore, he could only Lin Qin bring a gift up the mountain first, explain the matter with the sect leader of Qiongyu Sect, and they could come up with a plan.

Lin Qin agreed and soon went up the mountain with a gift. He adhered to his responsibility and declined the suggestion that he go and rest first.

Qiongyu sect leader was very busy recently. Fortunately, Lin Qin was led straight to him with little obstruction.

For the companion ceremony, Qiongyu Sect actually sent an invitation to Yuanming Sect. As a result, the sect leader smiled at Lin Qin, thinking that he came because of the invitation.

Lin Qin met with him respectfully, relieved to see the Qiong Yumen’s sect leader. Because it was not easy to raise a too heavy topic so soon, he could only congratulate him.

This greeting lasted for two quarters of an hour. He was still racking his brains on how to bring up the topic when there was a sudden noise outside. Intermixed in this noise was a voice saying, “Aiya, wait a moment.” Someone walked quickly passed him and fell on his knees before the Qiongyu sect leader.

It was a chubby boy, trembling all over. He propped his hands on the ground, slightly arched his five fingers, pressing the fingertips hard to the ground, and said in a trembling, anxious voice, "Qiongyu Doaist Master, please find justice for this junior."

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 53

This chubby youth was A’Lin, who should have been with Yu Yuan in town.

Lin Qin blurted out, “Junior Brother A’Lin!”

A’Lin heard him called but didn’t look back. He continued to speak, saying words that he’d probably wanted to say for a long time. Although he was stammering due to the tension, his words were still quite clear.

He talked about everything that had happened in recent days and requested to hand over the matter regarding Yan Jin. Finally, he said in a trembling voice, "Junior was inattentive and caused a big disaster. Regarding my senior brothers’ blame, I have nothing to say. I only sincerely request that spiritual master provide one or two pointers. If there is a way to get Senior Brother Zhang’s statement to clear my name, then I would die without regret.”

As A’Lin spoke, his tone was mournful yet slightly courageous. Listening to him, Lin Qin couldn’t help but feel upset. He said, “Junior Brother A’Lin, we don’t blame you…”

A’Lin turned to look at him. In the past few days, he’d suffered a lot in his heart. He was obviously thinner, and his cheeks were sunken. His expression was desolate as he said, "I know that my disciple brothers have been avoiding me these past few days. Senior Brother Yuan also sent a letter to master, requesting that martial uncle come and take me back...None of you believe me.”

Lin Qin was momentarily speechless. He opened his mouth but couldn't say

anything. In the end, he could only stand up and treat Spiritual Master Qiongyu with utmost courtesy. "Spiritual master, please forgive my junior brother’s rudeness. Regarding this matter, we can’t determine the truth and so we would like to ask spiritual master for a pointer or two…"

This was basically the same as A'Lin's words.

Spiritual Master Qiongyu’s expression turned grave. He supported Lin Qin up with one hand and said, “Where is Yan Jin right now?”

.....

In the small town at the foot of Qiongyu Sect’s mountain, Yu Yuan forced himself to remain calm. “Think again. When and where was the last time you saw Junior Brother A’Lin?”

The youth said, ”One hour ago, Junior Brother A’Lin said that he was hungry and wanted to go out and buy some buns that were being sold by the side of the inn. I could see him from where I stood just outside the door. So I didn’t keep up. I just looked at him from the door. As Junior Brother A’Lin was paying, suddenly a child ran out, causing a group of people to chase after him. After the chaotic group of people ran over, Junior Brother A’Lin was gone."

He added in a low voice, “...I thought Junior Brother A’Lin was pushed away by the crowd and so I waited. But, after a while, I still didn’t see him. I searched everywhere but couldn’t find him.”

Yu Yuan said anxiously, “Martial uncle is coming. Junior Brother A’Lin must not have any mishaps….” He paused. Taking a deep breath, he forced his expression to remain calm, not wanting to cause any more panic. “Search again…”

Before he could finish the rest of his words, he was interrupted by a voice outside saying “Senior Brother Yuan.”

It was Lin Qin's voice.

Lin Qin had already met with Spiritual Master Qiongyu and returned?

Yu Yuan momentarily put down other thoughts and walked out quickly. But, the moment he went out, he became stunned.

Lin Qin was back with Spiritual Master Qiongyu’s junior disciple, Spiritual Master Qi Yu. And the person standing next to him...Wasn’t that the A’Lin who’d gone missing again?

Yu Yuan's expression shifted slightly.

.....

That group of youths was being noisy about something. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin heard a bit but didn’t pay it any mind. After all, to the youths, they were nothing but big criminals. Instead, they just treated it as if they were just tired and came to take a rest at the inn.

The door was not closed tightly, but two youths guarded it carefully, fearing they would sneak away.

Shen Zhixian took a light sip of tea. His eyebrows slightly wrinkled before smoothing out. “It’s too light and a bit tasteless.”

He set the tea cup down and no longer touched it. Resting his chin in his hand, he said in a voice low enough for only the two of them to hear. "This group of little guys seems to be looking for a supporter... When they properly arrange things with A’Lin, let’s leave.”

In fact, the youths' hostility was getting burdensome. Shen Zhixian had been worried that there was something weird going on with A’Lin, and these young buns might suffer as a result of it. But now that they’re looking for a supporter, he and Yan Jin could quietly leave once an opportunity arose.

This group of young guys didn’t understand the affairs of life. Even after

walking with them for so long, they still couldn’t figure anything out. They could only make Yan Jin feel wronged.

He wasn’t willing to let Yan Jin be wronged!

Over the past few days, he’d watched as the group of youths repeatedly shot Yan Jin bad looks. No matter how good his temper was, he couldn’t bear it anymore.

Yan Jin quietly murmured “Mmnn” in agreement. He had no objections. In fact, he’d long wanted to take Shen Zhixian away. He found it unbearable that he couldn’t teach this group of youths a lesson for being so disrespectful to Shen Zhixian.

They each wanted to mutually save the other from suffering injustice. Thus, the plan to slip away was very agreeable. Who knew that this idea would be dashed within moments.

Yu Yuan brought in Spiritual Master Qi Yu, who also brought with him the sect’s magical artifact. This treasure was an eleventh rank magic weapon. With this treasure, he invited them to enter Qiongyu Sect’s forbidden room.

This forbidden room, to put it plainly, was the Qiongyu Sect’s dungeon.

Fortunately, there was a bed, a small table, and even two praying mats. As dungeons go, it wasn’t too bad.

After Spiritual Master Qi Yu left, they looked at each other for a moment. Shen Zhixian bent over and laughed. He joked, “....How interesting.”

In fact, if the magic artifact really was used, with their cultivation, they could still break out as long as they combined force. However, if they resisted, it would only inevitably make the situation worse.

Qiongyu Sect’s happy occasion was near, and the people who’d been invited had started to arrive. Even though they were only disciples from small sects, they were very noisy and irritating, especially with regards to

Yan Jin’s capture. Yan Jin became the target of the crowd, with everyone demanding that Yan Jin be executed.

Qiongyu Sect’s plan was to calmly settle the companion ceremonies first and then deal with Yan Jin and Shen Zhixian afterward.

Shen Zhixian tried to push open the forbidden room’s door, but it was locked by a restriction. The restriction was actually rather clever. If it was forcibly broken, the entire sect would immediately know that they’d escaped.

Shen Zhixian gave up on the idea of using violence to break the restriction. He looked around slowly. After deciding that the environment was acceptable, he saw down on the low bed and patted the space beside him. “A’jin, come over and sit here.”

Yan Jin obediently sat down next to him.

Shen Zhixian quietly looked at his expression but saw at once that he displayed no expression. He couldn’t tell whether there was any joy or anger. Thinking that Yan Jin might feel aggrieved, he felt uncomfortable in his heart. As he was wondering how to cheer him up, Yan Jin spoke first, “The companion ceremony...What’s that?”

Shen Zhixian didn't expect that he would ask this question first. After a short pause, he answered, "It's when two people have an affinity with each other and decide to spend the rest of their lives together as Dao companions."

He thought that Yan Jin was just curious about the companion ceremony between the two Qiongyu Sect disciples. Unexpectedly, Yan Jin just murmured “mmn” and then thoughtfully asked, “Then Sui Xian is my...Dao companion?”

Shen Zhixian, "...."

Yan Jin said the two words “Dao companion” softly and slowly. He seemed

a little uncertain and a little hopeful as he waited anxiously for a positive answer. Within the darkness, he stared unblinkingly at Shen Zhixian.

Suddenly, Shen Zhixian’s mouth went dry, as if he’d lost his ability to speak. He wanted to deny it but felt that he would end up hurting Yan Jin. He wanted to confirm it, but his face suddenly became too hot and shyness gripped his tongue.

After a long pause, he hemmed and hawed before saying, “A’jin, have you really decided?”

Yan Jin nodded without hesitation.

Shen Zhixian looked at him, his expression very serious and solemn. Then, he unconsciously licked his lips and forced himself to calm down. "Then, then it is."

He also decided that if he fell in love, then he fell in love. He wasn’t a guy who was determined to be straight. Speaking of romantic love, it was already rare enough for him to be able to transmigrate into a book, much less be able to hold on to the protagonist. How rare and fortunate!

During this period of time, as they continued to interact, Shen Zhixian had been seriously reflecting over this issue. Yan Jin clearly had a stubborn temperament. Once he set his mind on something, he won’t give it up. And, as for Shen Zhixian himself…

When it came to romantic sentiments, he was also someone who was dedicated and single minded. When he liked someone, he would like that person wholeheartedly. No matter how uncertain the outcome, he also won’t give it up.

The scene wasn’t ostentatious. Just, in this humble, forbidden room, two people simply asking each other about a life together, thoroughly laying out and communicating their intentions.

Without words, tenderness lingered silently between them. Linked by the

contract, the same joy merged together and instantaneously expanded several times over. From within their heart was a sweetness that wrapped them in honey, making it feel as if it was being lightly tickled with the softest of feathers.

Shen Zhixian held Yan Jin's hand and, with his head down, nonchalantly played with his fingers. After playing for a while, he heard Yan Jin ask, "The Dao companion ceremony...how does it work?"

"Burn incense to worship heaven and earth, commit to a lifelong contract." Shen Zhixian didn't think much about it and simply tried to recall the Dao companion ceremony. He casually added, "Probably like this? I'm not very clear on it."

Hearing these words, Yan Jin paused. Shen Zhixian understood him and immediately responded, "Our contract is different. It should just be an ordinary...master and disciple contract…"

As his words trailed off, he became a little less confident. In fact, he wasn't too certain what this contract was exactly. It was only a fragment of a page, with no top and no bottom. If the situation with Yan Jin wasn't so urgent at that time, he wouldn't have taken it out so abruptly...

In order to cover up his ignorance, Shen Zhixian decided to take the lead in shifting blame. "If it wasn't because you did that thing, then I would have allowed you to leave and not block your path...A'jin, be honest. At that time, you absolutely didn't want to recognize me as your master, right?"

It felt like such a long time ago. Now, that they're in this kind of relationship, when Shen Zhixian recalled Yan Little Hedgehog Jin's conduct at that time, he could only sigh.

Gaining this disciples heart was really like navigating a seabed full of needles.

At that time, he'd been worried whether Yan Jin was the little cabbage or the pig. Who would have imagined that, in the end, Yan Jin would turn out

to be the cabbage while he himself became the pig.

—Wait, why should he call himself a pig?!

Peipei, he wasn’t a pig. He should be a white jade, flawless, and noble cabbage!

—No, wait a second, he was so good. Why should he compare himself to a cabbage?!

Shen Zhixian, who felt wrong, pressed down these messy thoughts, only to find that Yan Jin's mood was suddenly downcast. He stared in surprise, not understanding why. Then, he saw the deep regret within Yan Jin’s eyes.

“Master, I’m sorry…” Yan Jin’s mouth tightened. He held Shen Zhixian’s hand in the palm of his hand and repeated in a low voice, “Sui Xian, I’m sorry…”

"If you’re still angry, you can hit me, scold me. Just don't leave me," Yan Jin said in a tight voice. His voice was full of unease and sadness, like a child who was afraid of losing the most precious treasure, making him cautious and afraid. "If you still leave, I would be alone."

Seeing Yan Jin in this kind of obstructed mood, Shen Zhixian felt as if an insect had taken a bite out of his heart, the sting incredibly painful. He almost immediately regretted teasing him.

He hugged Yan Jin to his side and rubbed his cheek against Yan Jin’s cheek. He awkwardly whispered into Yan Jin’s ear, “Okay, okay, okay. I won’t leave. Our A’jin is so good-looking, I’m also not willing to part with him.”

Afraid that Yan Jin might still think too much, he patted Yan Jin’s back and lightly coughed. Letting go of Yan Jin, he pulled out his storage bag, undid the restriction, and shook out all the things from inside. “Look, I brought a lot of things out from Qingyun Sect. A’jin, see if there’s anything you want. I’ll let you play with it.”

With an “Ah,” Shen Zhixian fished out a black bowl made out of an unknown material. “This seems to be a very good defensive weapon. A’jin, take it and put it away. Whoever tries to harm you in the future, you take him out with the bowl, alright? What are you searching for?”

Yan Jin picked up a book from the storage bag and, with an innocent look, said, " I want this ... "

Shen Zhixian, " ... "

He stuffed the bowl into Yan Jan’s arms, hastily grabbed the book, and repeatedly refused. “This, no, no, no. This book is not well written and might teach you bad things. “

Yan Jin’s hand still won’t let go of the book. After the book was tugged back and forth, he looked at the book, then looked at Shen Zhixian. He could clearly see that Shen Zhixian was reluctant to part with the book so he tried to soften him with a few words. “Since Sui Xian won’t let me look at the book, I won’t look at the book, I merely think that the volumes of books should be put together…”

Shen Zhixian rolled up the book and lightly tapped it against the back of Yan Jin’s hand, “Then you call me Master.”

Yan Jin obediently said, "Master"

Shen Zhixian nodded with satisfaction. Then, he ruthlessly put the book away and said with a smile, “Since I’m your master, then you must listen to my words. If I don’t want you to read it, then don’t read it.”

Yan Jin, "..."

Together, they talked about the book for a while, treating this forbidden room as their home on Qingyun Sect’s fifth peak. Forgetting that they were locked up, they chatted in a relaxed manner, laughing and casual.

They didn’t know how much time had passed, until a slight squeak

sounded, the noise similar to the wind blowing against leaves. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin’s conversation paused and they looked in the same direction.

A faint "Master" came from outside the door, and the door suddenly and silently opened a crack.

Slowly, slowly, the door creaked open.

A tall man in black stood at the door, his head turned stiffly towards them.

There was nothing at all on his blank face.

Peipei - an onomatopoeia that sounds like spitting.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 54

The two leading roles in Qiongyu Sect’s Dao companion ceremony was Spiritual Master Qiongyu’s disciple, Xue Fengzhi, and Spiritual Master Qi Yu’s disciple, Lian Ru.

Both of them came to the sect very early on and practiced together from a young age. As a result, they developed deep feelings for one another and naturally decided to have a Dao companion ceremony to signify their commitment.

There was only one day left before the Dao companion ceremony. Xue Fengzhi paced a few laps within the confines of his room, his calm almost nonexistent. He was like an impatient adolescent.

He poured himself a cup of cold tea, barely suppressing the restlessness in his heart.

Quickly, quickly, he will soon see A’ru…. Soon, they would be able to stay together day and night and will never be separated.

He was still thinking about his sweetheart, when suddenly a knock came at the door. He snapped to attention. "Who is it?"

A familiar voice came, sounding like a junior sister. "Senior Brother Xue, Senior Brother Xue!"

The voice was urgent, propelling Xue Fengzhi to stride to the door and open it, saying loudly, “What’s wrong?”

The door opened, revealing the junior sister’s anxious and panicked expression. “Senior Brother Xue! Senior Sister Lian seems to be in trouble.

The moment Lian Ru was mentioned, Xue Fengzhi’s attention was one hundred percent engaged.

"What happened?" he said as he hurriedly went out. "What's so urgent?”

The junior sister shook her head in panic and said, “I, it wasn't clear. As I was passing her room, I heard Senior Sister Lian screamed. It startled me and I hurriedly asked what happened—Sister Lian won’t open the door and only asked me to invite Senior Brother Xue over.”

Xue Fengzhi also recognized who this junior sister was now. She was someone that Lian Ru had once praised as very talented. He rushed past her, afraid that Lian Ru might have met with a mishap. He didn’t suspect her at all and only hurriedly thanked her before leaving in a hurry.

The junior sister followed him a few steps. Seeing that he wasn’t paying attention to her, she gradually slowed down and eventually stood still.

She glanced at Xue Fengzhi's disappearing figure, and a stiff smile appeared at the corners of her mouth. Then she looked around, probably to carefully check her surroundings, and changed direction.

As Xue Fengzhi hurried to Lian Ru, he encountered many people along the way. However, he had no time to say hello and only rushed on.

The door to Lian Ru's room was tightly shut. He knocked a few times and called Lian Ru's name but no one answered.

Gritting his teeth, Xue Fengzhi tried to push the door open. The door was latched, meaning that Lian Ru should be inside the room.

But why hadn’t she responded?

Xue Fengzhi didn’t have time to think too much. His spiritual force surged

and directly broke the door latch. Pushing open the door, he strode into the room. "A’ru?"

The woman sitting on the bed seemed to be in a daze. Waking up, she turned her head toward him and said, "Fengzhi? Why are you here?"

Xue Fengzhi looked at her normal appearance. It seemed that there was nothing serious. His heart settled and he smiled. “Little junior sister came to me and said you were in trouble and was looking for me. What’s wrong?”

He took a closer look at Lian Ru’s face and noticed that she looked abnormally pale. Worried, he said, “Are you uncomfortable? Why is your face so pale?”

Lian Ru moved slightly and shifted her body forward.

Xue Fengzhi didn’t know if it was just his imagination, but he felt as if Lian Ru’s action was very stiff and the way she talked was a little strange.

"My chest hurts a bit ..." Lian Ru raised her hand to cover her chest, her face still pale. On closer inspection, there was a tinge of death hidden within that paleness.

Xue Fengzhi noticed something strange. He took two steps forward and stared at Lian Ru tensely. "Why do you have a headache for no reason?"

"It hurts..." Lian Ru bit her lip and, to his surprise, suddenly raised her hands, grabbed her collars, and fiercely yanked open her top.

There was a tearing sound. Xue Fengzhi was too astonished to turn his head and avoid seeing it. And then, he immediately became shocked by the sight in front of him.

Lian Ru’s body was on the verge of collapse. Xue Fengzhi rushed to catch her in his embrace. With his arms wrapped around her, Xue Fengzhi could feel her trembling, as if there was only the skeleton left and no vitality at all. And there, on her chest…

Was a big, empty hole.

Through the hole, he could even see his hands behind Lian Ru.

"A’ru! A’ru!"

He shouted her name with a trembling voice. The spiritual power he tried to pass to her would not take. Within moments, her body was cold, her eyes hollow and lifeless, indicating that she was long dead. While Xue Fengzhi wasn’t paying attention, a strand of black qi quietly slipped away from her fingertip.

Faced with this sudden tragedy, Xue Fengzhi’s eyes showed a wild disbelief. This morning’s exultation was now replaced by grief. His spiritual force became chaotic as it moved through his veins. With a scream, he opened his mouth and spit out blood.

"Heh..."

A low, mocking laugh came from behind the screen. Xue Fengzhi turned his head and saw exactly the face he’d seen within the illusion stone. Then, with a light leap, the man in black escaped through the wide-open window. After landing, he quickly disappeared.

At this moment, Spiritual Master Qi Yu and a group of disciples happened to arrive. They’d all been drawn in by the little junior sister’s exclamation that “Lian Ru has an accident.” As they stood by the door, they heard a roar full of heartbreaking grief and hatred. “Yan Jin!”

Spiritual Master Qi Yu’s expression shifted. He gripped one of the disciple’s wrist, shouting, “Go to the forbidden room!”

.....

At first, the forbidden room was silent. Until, the faceless man dressed in black began talking.

Without a mouth, the man’s voice seemed to come from his abdomen, sounding dull and heavy. Even so, his tone and manner of speaking sounded exactly like Yan Jin.

"Master, I haven't seen you for a long time."

Shen Zhixian narrowed his eyes slightly. "I only have one disciple. What kind of monster are you that you dare to speak so recklessly?”

The man in black ignored his words and continued to say, "Master, disciple have come to save you ..."

He moved aside, revealing the way out.

Shen Zhixian checked and found that although the forbidden room’s restriction had not been completely unlocked, the communication-related control had been broken—That is, even if they now violently broke the restriction, it wouldn’t alarm others.

Shen Zhixian's mind raced. Before he had time to make a decision, the man in black seemed to have heard something. He suddenly turned and ran away!

Although he looked like a slow-witted, wooden person, he ran fast. He seemed to be fairly familiar with the area because he soon disappeared.

Shen Shixian let out light snort. Without hesitation, one hand grasped Yan Jin’s hand while the other pulled out his sword. The cold sword qi shattered the restriction, and his sleeves fluttered as he chased after the man.

As soon as they left, Spiritual Master Qiong Yu arrived with some people, only to find the forbidden room empty and the restriction broken. Spiritual Master Qiong Yu’s face turned ugly. He gritted his teeth and bit out two words, “Yan Jin!”

He snapped, “With this hatred, we can’t coexist under the same sky. I,

Qiong Yu Sect, and you are irreconcilable!

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin weren’t aware of the movement in the forbidden room. At this moment, they were chasing the man in black. However, he soon left Qiongyu Sect and entered a remote location.

Shen Zhixian faintly sensed that something was wrong. He stopped and took a deep breath. "A’jin, strike him!"

Yan Jin's response to Shen Zhixian’s command had always been faster than thinking. As soon as Shen Zhixian said the words, he pulled out his sword without any hesitation and struck the man with enough force to break a boulder!

The man dressed in black, who always seemed to be three feet ahead of them, stopped abruptly. Then, he shattered into powder.

Shen Zhixian, "..."

The strike was...too strong.

He walked over a few steps and faintly smelled a familiar scent. Shen Zhixian’s expression grew slightly heavy as he bent down and broke off a blade of grass.

The original blade of grass was covered with a layer of fine powder, which looked to be the same kind of ash that contaminated the leaf he’d sent after “A’Lin.”.

“Puppet wood…” Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth. “I’m afraid we’ve been fooled. We’ve been lured away into a trap."

Someone had used puppet wood to create a dummy and deceive them into leaving Qiongyu Sect. Meaning that something must have happened in Qiongyu Sect. Perhaps, there might now be a new calamity that they’ll be blamed for…

Just as Shen Zhixian was about to say something, Yan Jin’s gaze suddenly focused. His hand shot up into the air and grabbed on to a strand of black qi as thick as a finger. Like a fish suddenly caught from a stream, the black qi struggled desperately.

Shen Zhixian shot a spell at the black qi. “Return to the source.”

The moment the spell merged into the black qi, Yan Jin let go, and the black qi flowed toward a certain direction.

Coincidentally, the source of the black qi was not far away. Within a quarter of an hour, the black qi flashed toward a man dressed in black and happily merged into his body. The man’s face looked exactly like Yan Jin's.

Shen Zhixian said, "A’jin, strike him again! Wait, don’t strike too hard--"

The man in black heard his voice and was shocked. He immediately turned and ran, his speed faster than the wooden puppet from before.

However, he wasn’t as fast as Yan Jin's sword.

Yan Jin’s sword blocked his path. He was forced to turn around, only to meet Shen Zhixian’s sword. Shen Zhixian ruthlessly slashed Frost Return at the man’s face. “You rat who refused to show his face to anyone. How dare you wear this face?!”

Blood splattered, and the carefully fabricated mask was splintered into light smoke, which then spread out, revealing a face that they hadn’t seen for a long time.

"—Yan Shen?" Shen Zhixian stumbled slightly. "You’re not dead yet?"

The man in black with Yan Jin's face was Yan Shen, whose spirit root Shen Zhixian had severed at the Sword Competition!!

Shen Zhixian had almost forgotten about this character. He knew that Yan Shen's hands were not very clean. Among the things that he’d done, eighty

percent of the time, he had people behind the scene flaming him on. But, Shen Zhixian had always thought that once Yan Shen’s spirit root was broken, he would no longer have any value and would therefore be abandoned.

He was wrong.

Yan Shen’s speed definitely didn’t look like he had no spirit root nor any spirit force.

Shen Zhixian pointed Frost Return at Yan Shen. The sword trembled slightly, as if it recognized devil qi nearby and was growing excited.

—Yan Shen was a devil cultivator.

Yan Shen’s face dripped with blood as countless wounds ran across it, the new intermixed and overlapped with the old. But, he didn’t seem to care and hissed, “Master, long time no see. How can you treat disciple like this?”

Shen Zhixian looked at him and coldly said, "You’d been expelled by me. Being your master, I can’t afford it. I only have one disciple and his name is Yan Jin.”

Yan Shen looked at him with a strange smile. He touched the wounds on his face and laughed, which made him look all the more horrifying. “Master is very good to Senior Brother Yan. But, I don’t know if this goodness is because Master values his brilliance? Or, is it because of something dirty and unspeakable?

His eyes were full of malice, even as he tried to create gaps and wounds between Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. His spoke viciously, his words sharp like a knife, “Master, ah, you’re once like the moon in the sky. Now, you’re mingling with Yan Jin, this filthy rat that crawled out of the ditch?

For a moment, Yan Jin’s imposing manner flickered. Shen Zhixian didn’t want to talk nonsense with Yan Shen, especially when he sensed Yan Jin’s unease. He raised an eyebrow and pointed Frost Return at Yan Shen.

The ice-cold sword qi coiled around Yan Shen’s body, quickly eroding his blood vessels. The blood instantly froze into ice.

Yan Shen hissed in pain. His throat was frozen, making him unable to say anything. He could only stare at Shen Zhixian with hatred and madness

Shen Zhixian looked at him and said slowly, “Originally, I was too lazy to talk nonsense with you, but since your misunderstanding is so deep...I think it's necessary to clarify some matters with you.”

He leaned forward slightly, his eyes reflecting the sunlight and his voice was soft. “I’m very good, and Yan Jin is also very good. Between us, there is nothing dirty and nothing that cannot be said. What we have is a very beautiful and sincere affection, primarily because we cherish each other. It is unfortunate that you’ll never experience it in your life. A bit regretful, but it serves you right.”

He added lightly, “Yan Shen, look at you now. You’re like a bug curled up in a corner. Extremely embarrassing.”

Shen Zhixian rarely taunted others, but he didn’t like Yan Shen’s offensive remarks. Let alone Yan Jin, even Shen Zhixian himself felt uncomfortable when hearing those words. He couldn’t help but block his mouth and argue back.

He originally felt that, in this relationship, Yan Jin was too prone to insecurity. Perhaps, because he’d experienced so much pain and suffering as a child. As a result, Shen Zhixian always paid close attention to Yan Jin’s emotions. With much difficulty, he’d managed to coax Yan Jin into being happy, only to have Yan Shen destroy it.

Shen Zhixian really wanted to beat him up a little bit.

Yan Shen apparently didn’t expect that Shen Zhixian wouldn’t even disdain to cover up their relationship. Therefore, when Shen Zhixian confessed it so frankly, he gasped, feeling cold in his lungs. Unwillingness and disgust

swept over his whole body. He struggled, exhausting all his strength, until he was finally able to say in a rough and broken voice, “Pei...pei! He...What is so good about him…?”

Yan Shen spit out a mouthful of cold blood. When he spoke again, his voice still sounded unpleasant, but his words came out smoother and clearer, “Master, I'm mediocre so I won’t get your favor no matter how hard I try, but…”

“But, you don’t know, Yan Jin, he is also a--”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 55

Yan Shen has always known that his qualifications were mediocre. He was just an ordinary person with the good fortune to enter Qingyun Sect.

This good luck was due to Song Ming.

When Song Ming saw him, he looked at him for a long time. Then, he said indifferently, “Your qualifications are very ordinary. But, as long as you work hard, it is not impossible.”

This sentence ignited a fire in Yan Shen's heart.

If he had been an ordinary person, perhaps he wouldn’t think so much. But, Song Ming brought him back to Qingyun Sect and paved a path for him that seemed magnanimous and wide. It made him greedy, made him unwilling to return to obscurity.

Perhaps, Song Ming settled on him because he could sense that Yan Shen had a temperament that made him want to strive for success, by fair means or foul.

Song Ming took a chance and pretended to inadvertently introduce him to Shen Zhixian. At the time, Shen Zhixian had already accepted Yan Jin as his disciple. When he saw Yan Shen, he only let out a snort that hinted at his disagreement, but he did not refuse outright.

Yan Shen worshiped this kind of master. He originally thought that this was the beginning of a bright and glorious future. But, he later discovered himself in a deep hole. His aptitude for cultivation was not good, but as a

common-borned person, he quickly thought of countermeasures.

He vaguely speculated that Song Ming might not feel so friendly toward Shen Zhixian under the surface. And, due to his heart ailment, Shen Zhixian's temperament was uncertain. Moreover, his relationship with his disciple, Yan Jin, was extremely bad.

Yan Shen secretly figured out these relationships. He didn't care what Song Ming thought about Shen Zhixian. He was more concerned about his current status. His goal was to become Shen Zhixian's most dependable disciple.

This was actually what Song Ming had vaguely hinted to him. And, though he answered in affirmation on the surface, he actually had his own secret intentions in his heart. Although Shen Zhixian lost the position of sect leader of Qingyun Sect, he was still highly respected due his close relationship with the former sect leader. As long as Yan Shen became Shen Zhixian's most valued disciple, his position within Qingyun Sect would…

Be tall and lofty, and not low.

Unfortunately, in front of him stood a talented Yan Jin, blocking his way.

Fortunately, Shen Zhixian didn't seem to like Yan Jin one bit. One could say that he even loathe him. With a deep and great joy, Yan Shen tried hard to cultivate, wanting to make a name for himself in front of Shen Zhixian and gain his attention.

Everything was slowly moving forward in the direction he'd anticipated. But, he didn't know why, after the Hidden Sword Pavilion incident, Shen Zhixian's attitude toward Yan Jin suddenly changed. Instead of punishing him, he moved Yan Jin up to the peak and began to personally teach him.

Suddenly, Yan Shen was given the cold shoulder and was left alone in a corner. His fellow disciples observed for a while and began to quickly leave him one by one. Everyone kept a distance from him. A fire of jealousy and unwillingness burst uncontrollably to life in his heart. He began to make

various plans in an attempt to pull Yan Jin down.

As he schemed, he began to discover more secrets. He'd always thought that Yan Jin entered Qingyun Sect by relying on his strength to become Shen Zhixian's disciple. He didn't expect that Yan Jin would turn out to be…

Someone that Song Ming had brought back from that place.

Currently, immortal cultivators opposed devil cultivators and the devil race. It was reported that, a long time ago, immortal cultivators united together and used various enchantments to seal and confine devil fiends to the wasteland, not allowing them to see the light of day.

When Song Ming brought Yan Jin back from the edge of the wasteland, it was said that he looked more devil than human. It required a lot of time and efforts on Song Ming's part to dispel the devil qi from Yan Jin's body.

When Yan Shen stumbled upon this secret, he'd first felt shocked, which was quickly followed by great ecstasy. From then on, it was impossible for him to believe that Yan Jin was clean. He immediately began to scheme and to devote every effort to attract and instigate devil cultivators into harming people at the Sword Competition.

Under everyone eyes, he intended to expose Yan Jin as a devil, making it so that Yan Jin could never extricate himself. Once Yan Jin was out of the way, Shen Zhixian would have no choice but to rely on him in the future.

Just to be on the safe side, Yan Shen expended great efforts to capture a strand of devil qi and sneaked it into Yan Jin's body.

He thought his plan was foolproof. But, he never imagined that Shen Zhixian would unhesitatingly trust and protect Yan Jin, nor did he expect that the strand of devil qi he'd planted inside Yan Jin's body would suddenly disappear without a trace. Instead, through his contacts with the devil cultivator, he'd instead been contaminated. It was him who was identified by Frost Return as a devil cultivator and him whose spirit root

was severed.

“But, you don’t know. Yan Jin, he is just a--”

He was just a lowly person that Song Ming had picked up from the edge of the wasteland. There might even be the blood of devil fiends running through his veins!

They both came from the same humble origin. Why could Shen Zhixian care about Yan Jin so much?! While he, he’d worked so hard but, in the end, all he got was wasted efforts.

Yan Jin’s identity will be exposed sooner or later. When that time came, Shen Zhixian will be implicated and suffer a complete fall from grace.

But, Yan Shen wasn’t able to say any of these words. His eyes snapped open, the sound of ice breaking resounding loudly in his ears. Agonizing pain crashed through him.

A piercing sword ray punctured through the pit of Yan Shen’s stomach. Yan Jin retracted his sword, while, on Yan Shen’s body, the frozen blood did not gush out. Instead, it shattered with a sharp, crisp sound.

The powerful sword qi threw Yan Shen’s internal state into disorder, making his body seem like a bag of skin leaking mud. Yan Shen’s bloodshot eyes screamed his hatred and unwillingness. Because he’d lost the ability to speak, he could only gasp loudly and angrily, even as his body swelled like a balloon.

Yan Jin grabbed Shen Zhixian’s waist and, in a natural movement, pulled him back some ten steps. With a stroke of his sword, a strong barrier enclosed them, blocking them from the dirty things that rained from Yan Shen’s body as he exploded.

Countless dark qi spread out and dispersed. Shen Zhixian coldly looked on and, when everything had calmed, he lightly said, “Why did you kill him…?”

Yan Jin carefully looked at his face. His hand tightened on Shen Zhixian's waist as he faintly said, "I…"

When he'd thought about what Yan Shen might say, he instinctively chose to destroy his mouth. But now that he was dead, Yan Jin didn't know how to face Shen Zhixian. Shen Zhixian probably lost many of his past memories. Although Yan Jin missed the warmth of the past, he was even more afraid that Shen Zhixian would discover the truth.

He would know Yan Jin's origin, know all the dark and dirty things he'd done in the past.

Shen Zhixian sighed and patted his hand, saying, "Killing that guy...is just dirtying your hand."

He only said this sentence. Deciding not to care too much about Yan Jin's unfinished words, he switched the topic over to the issue regarding the Qiongyu Sect. "Yan Shen was coming from Qiongyu Sect's direction. He probably went there to make trouble for you."

"I originally wanted to use him to clear up your name. But, now I'll have to think of other methods. Speaking of which, Yan Jin's spirit root was already severed, and he was imprisoned by Song Ming. I thought he'd died. But, who knew that he'd become a devil cultivator and come out to commit crimes."

Shen Zhixian closed his eyes a little as he connected the dots. After escaping from Qingyun Sect and becoming a devil cultivator, Yan Shen must have used puppet woods to create several fake Yan Jins. He then used these Yan Jin puppets to harm people, with the intent of framing Yan Jin.

However, puppet wood was extremely difficult to find. Only puppet woods that had matured for more than 100 years can create real puppets. Previously, Shen Zhixian had to expend a lot of effort to find puppet woods and had used the last bit to create a puppet of himself, which he'd left behind in Qingyun Sect.

In such a short period of time, how could Yan Shen be so lucky as to find another piece of puppet wood? No. Shen Zhixian was more inclined to believe that Yan Shen had discovered the puppet he'd left behind in Qingyun Sect. Afterward, he'd probably mixed in dark qi and used secret methods to create many new puppets.

The A'lin who'd murdered someone in front their eyes definitely wasn't the real A'lin. In fact, the real A'lin had probably died long ago. Later, when they'd found A'lin again, it was probably Yan Shen posing as him. This allowed him to easily mix into Qiongyu Sect and release them from the forbidden room.

After Yan Shen became a devil cultivator, his ability was simply too awesome. One could only imagine how much worse he would be if he'd actually became a fiend.

Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows. "Before I left Qingyun Sect, I used puppet wood to create a dummy to act as myself in retreat. It was probably exposed now."

Who'd discovered it?

Naturally, it was Song Ming.

The relationship between Yan Shen and Song Ming wasn't hard to guess. The fact that Yan Shen could successfully escape from Qingyun Sect would absolutely require Song Ming's approval. Even in this series of events, Song Ming was probably the hand behind the scenes.

After all, in Qingyun Sect, it was only Song Ming who would have this ability.

The current situation inside Qingyun Sect was unknown. It was very likely that Yan Shen's action was done at Song Ming's command, thus forcing him to appear before them now...

Shen Zhixian’s thoughts sped as he pondered the issue. The good news was that now that Yan Shen was dead, there would be no new victims. The bad news was that he'd left behind a big mess for them to clean up. Shen Zhixian was afraid that the problem could only be resolved using other methods.

He wanted to ask Yan Jin what he thought. But, when he tilted his head up, he saw that Yan Jin wore a tight expression. His mouth was pinched tightly, as if he’d encountered a big problem.

At first Shen Zhixian thought that he was struggling with this serious matter and comforted him with great care. "It doesn't matter. If you don’t kill him, he’ll just kill you. Yan Shen had already become a devil cultivator and would only be a scourge if he lives. Even if he didn’t die today, I would have thought of a way to get rid of him.”

Shen Zhixian was afraid that Yan Jin thought he'd blamed him for killing Yan Shen. Unexpectedly, after he’d finished speaking, Yan Jin’s expression only became worse.

"If ..." Yan Jin said with difficulty, not even daring to say the name Sui Xian. "...I also become a person like him, will Master renounce our relationship?"

Shen Zhixian was somewhat surprised.

As we all know, "if" and "I have a friend" are very subtle sentences. Often, when using these words, the reality was that the situation or the friends were the speakers themselves.

Shen Zhixian looked at him for a long time and calmly said, "What are you hiding from me?"

Yan Jin didn’t speak. He didn’t dare speak. His chest felt as if it was filled with a pot of hot oil, making his internal organs felt as if they were being cooked by said oil, causing him repeated torment.

After leaving the secret realm, he'd regained some of his memories, enough to know that he'd not been so clean in his previous life. In his previous life, after his spirit root was severed, he...he'd likely entered the devil's path.

Since then, he'd gradually became aware that something was wrong with him. Ever since the red spirit pellet inside the secret realm was destroyed, something in his body had quietly awakened.

He was afraid of this change in him and was too anxious to move one step. In the end, he could only doubtfully and quietly tried to probe Shen Zhixian's bottom line. All the while, from being to end, he didn't dare open his mouth to tell him.

He was afraid.

He was afraid that once Shen Zhixan found out, he would look at him differently, looking at him in much the same way he'd looked at Yan Shen, with dislike and disgust. As if he was merely a foul piece of trash.

He couldn't bear for Shen Zhixian to look at him that way.

But, he also couldn't continue to deceive he.

When Shen Zhixian saw that he wasn't saying anything, he grabbed his hand and indiscriminately passed a strand of spiritual power into his body. He carefully examined every inch of Yan Jin's veins.

Finally, within Yan Jin's secret depths, Shen Zhixian sensed a strand of devil qi.

The strand of devil qi was very weak. The tendril swam like a naughty fish through Yan Jin's meridian. Shen Zhixian exerted his own spiritual power and ran after it.

After running for a long time, the devil qi was probably tired. It stopped running and, instead, turned around to coil around Shen Zhixian's strand of spiritual power before making an abrupt turn.

It swam for a bit before increasing its speed, seeming very happy as it moved on.

Shen Zhixian almost laughed at it. But soon he discovered something--why did he sense a familiar breath within this strand of devil qi?

With a trace of doubt, he stealthily moved closer to the devil qi. The devil qi probably felt his approach. It trembled happily for a moment before leading Shen Zhixian’s strand of spiritual force toward Yan Jin’s spiritual sea.

The closer he got to Yan Jin’s spiritual sea, the heavier that familiar breath became. Shen Zhixian thought it was the contract, but he soon realized that he was mistaken. It was as if there was a restriction placed there...

Shen Zhixian’s spiritual force stopped before entering Yan Jin’s spiritual sea. After a moment, the strand of devil qi circled back, seeming quite pleased with itself as it greeted Shen Zhixian.
Then, it slowly returned.

—Why was there a restriction placed in Yan Jin’s spiritual sea?

—Why was the restriction so...familiar, as if it'd been he himself who'd set it?

Shen Zhixian slowly raised his gaze and looked into Yan Jin's eyes.

Xixi: If you're confused by the interchangeability between fiend and devil, just think of them as the same thing (which they probably are?). Sometimes the author uses the character for "devil" and sometimes she would use the ones that directly translates as "devil creature/thing," to which I translated as fiend.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 56

For the first time, Shen Zhixian felt deeply that Yan Jin was full of small secrets.

He was certain that since he’d transmigrated, he’d never set a restriction on Yan Jin and there was no memory within this body that indicated the original Shen Zhixian had done so either.

Shen Zhixian was silent, and an absurd idea quietly materialized—he and Yan Jin, maybe they’d known each other before they became a pair of master and disciple.

Maybe, long ago, in those vague memories, they...No, it should be the original owner, who’d met or intersected with Yan Jin in some way.

Shen Zhixian’s heart felt stuffy, brimming with a very unhappy emotion.

He couldn’t help but remember that “very good person” that Yan Jin had once mentioned.

Shen Zhixian wasn’t a person who liked to indulge in the past, nor did he like to hold grudges over other people’s past. So, all this while, he’d been telling himself not to become too caught up in Yan Jin’s old matters. All he knew was that Yan Jin had a difficult childhood, and so he was all the more resolved to treat him well in the future, determined to make him happy.

But now, he felt as if a small thorn had sneaked up in his heart, making him feel more than a little uncomfortable.

He realized that he might be a little bit jealous. He and Yan Jin had just formally established a relationship, and yet, he'd already tasted the sour taste of vinegar mixed with a few big lemons.

Due to Yan Shen's detonation, the surrounding area had the fishy odor unique to fiends. The smell was disgusting. Shen Zhixian retracted his eyes and pretended to relax, saying, "It smells bad here. Let's change places."

Yan Jin quietly said, "Mmn."

They didn't deliberate over the direction and randomly chose a path to walk. After walking for a while, they reached a short hill.

At the highest point on the hill, Shen Zhixian sat down cross-legged. "Let's stop here."

The night was particularly pleasant. The moon was bright, the stars twinkled, and a small breeze shook the grassy hillside.

Yan Jin silently sat down beside Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian said, "Actually, I really wanted to sit by a cliff like this when I was in Qingyun Sect." He smiled softly and lightly said, "Unfortunately, whenever I looked down at the bottomless cliff side, I was scared enough to cry. I also didn't dare to call you, fearing I would lose the dignity of a master."

Yan Jin pursed his lips. In fact, in the past few years, as the only disciple who could freely go in and out of Shen Zhixian's fifth peak, he had long been accustomed to witnessing Shen Zhixian's various laziness. Something like a master's dignity had long ago…

He didn't dare to tell the truth and only said, "If master wants, later..."

I will accompany you when we return to Qingyun Sect.

He paused, not speaking out the second half. There was a bitter

apprehension in his heart.

In the future... Will there be a future?

It seemed as if Yan Jin hadn’t called the name Sui Xian in a while, as if fearing that by saying this name, Shen Zhixian would remember something. Shen Zhixian blinked, as if he wasn’t aware of Yan Jin’s anxiety, and said his next words in a casual tone, “Okay. Accompany me later.”

Yan Jin’s eyes brightened, and his spine straightened ever so slightly.

Shen Zhixian lowered his head a little and looked at the small flower beside him. He asked softly, “Have we ever met before you came to Qingyun Sect?”

There was a terrible silence in the air. After a while, Yan Jin said with some difficulty, "Yes."

He paused and suddenly looked at Shen Zhixian. "Master, you can't remember, can you?"

Although it sounded like a question, his tone made it unequivocal. Shen Zhixian grew a little bit nervous, but he forced his face to remain calm. “It probably happened before the heart ailment. I don’t remember that time period very well.”

Even if I did remember, that person wasn’t really me...Shen Zhixian silently added in his heart.

And so on.

Shen Zhixian recalled when the original owner went out to gain experience, he’d used the name “Sui Xian.” Yan Jin also knew a person named “Sui Xian” when he was much younger. Since Yan Jin had said that they’d meet before, could it be that the Sui Xian that Yan Jin knew before was actually the original owner?

All sorts of messy thoughts jumbled around in Shen Zhixian's head. He signaled for Yan Jin to continue.

Yan Jin composed himself, then continued, "At that time, I was small, thin and weak, and I was often bullied by people…"

Yan Jin was born in a small village. His childhood was full of suffering. From as far back as he could remember, he'd always been spurned by everyone he'd met. The confused little Yan Jin could only vaguely understand why this was so by listening to the hostile words people had thrown at him.

Soon after he was born, both his parents died. His mother died giving birth to him, and his father slipped and drowned in the lake when he went to fetch water. Later, he didn't know who took care of him and saved his life. But, the village people said that he was a calamity. His hands would be stained with the blood of many people, and he would bring about many disasters.

Later, he was driven away from the village. Homeless and alone, he wandered everywhere. But, due to malnutrition, he was too thin and was often bullied wherever he went. Until, one day, Sui Xian saved him.

He seemed to have played down much of his childhood hardship and skipped many things, but Shen Zhixian could guess how much he'd suffered back then and patted the back of his hand to comfort him.

"...Later, I was passing through a small town when something happened, causing the people there to be very hostile toward me. At that time, Master had no choice but to take me away. Soon after, we were separated."

He stopped, his thoughts drifting back to the past.

There were two kids fighting in that small town. They both fought fiercely. The fatter child was careless and accidentally pushed the other down. The kid's head slammed into the curbside on the road.

They were in the corner of an alley with a dead end. No one passed through. The child who'd pushed the other saw the blood on the ground and panicked. He stood frozen for a long time, unable to calm down. Finally, with a weak cry, he ran as fast as he could to find an adult.

When the adults arrived, the fallen child barely had a breath left. He took one last gasp, unable to say anything. Although he was rushed to a doctor, he died within a quarter of an hour.

His parents were angry and anxious. When they asked who did it, the child couldn't admit his crime. He stammered for a while and suddenly pointed at the noodle shop across the street from the medical clinic. Sitting there was another child, eating noodles. "It's him! I saw the two of them fighting!"

Little Yan Jin, who was inexplicably made to carry the pot, swallowed a mouthful of noodles, feeling at a loss. He looked in bafflement at the child pointing directly at him and snapping, "That's him! He's a kid from outside! He killed Dahong!"

Dahong was the name of the dead child.

Everyone's eyes gathered on Little Yan Jin, full of hostility.

This small town was tiny and remote. Each family had their own small circle of land outside town. They were all very self-sufficient and rarely travelled far. What's more, few outsiders passed through. This overly closed environment caused the people in town to be more prejudiced against outsiders. Once something happened, they would naturally be biased.

At this moment, after listening to the child whom they'd known swore that Yan Jin was at fault, the townspeople didn't even think of doubting him. They rounded on Little Yan Jin with fierce hostility.

Dahong's father was a big man. The moment he came close enough to Little Yan Jin, he reached out to grip his sleeve.

Sui Xian, his face slightly dark, turned his chopsticks around and deftly

blocked the man’s hand, pushing back a few steps. “Just based on his words, how can you determine that we’re at fault?”

The child saw that everyone was beginning to believe the man. His eyes shifted, then he shouted, “They’re accomplice! They’re accomplice! They killed Dahong together!”

Later, things got out of hand.

No matter how Sui Xian argued, the people turned a deaf ear to his words. As far as they’re concerned, these two outsiders killed Dahong. Dahong’s mother cried and shouted, “God dammit! We only had this one child! From the very beginning, we raised him so well. It’s you outsider’s fault. You brought disaster and caused this to happen!”

Due to the ruckus, a group of people came over and crowded around them. Sui Xian saw this and gave up arguing. Without saying another word, he guarded Little Yan Jin and left.

They didn’t speak, and everyone also refused to let them go. Some people stood by the side of the road, brandishing poles. Meanwhile, others threw stones. It took a lot of effort for Sui Xian to protect Little Yan Jin in his arms and escape from town.

Little Yan Jin was securely guarded by Sui Xian, and so he was not hurt at all. But, he heard the sounds of things hitting Sui Xian. His little hands tightened on Sui Xian’s sleeves, and for the first time, he hated his own weakness.

He couldn’t even protect himself.

Nor could he...protect the person he valued.

A thorn that was buried at the bottom of his heart took root in his flesh. From time to time, it would pierce him, causing unbearable pain.

This matter was only the beginning. Along the way, their journey was not at

all smooth, and they always seemed to encounter various accidents, some of which were quite troublesome.

Sui Xian had to protect Little Yan Jin several more times, causing him some injuries.

Little Yan Jin could only silently remember that the villagers had said that he was a calamity.

He was unwilling to admit it, but it was becoming undeniable that he'd become a burden to Sui Xian.

Little Yan Jin's innermost heart ached with pain and suffering. The better Sui Xian treated him, the worse he felt. Then later, he experienced that thing...

"A'jin? A'jin?"

Shen Zhixian's soft voice dragged him from his memories. The moment he returned to the present, Yan Jin suddenly looked at Shen Zhixian and said aloud, "Master."

Shen Zhixian said, deeply apologetic, "I'm sorry. These things... I really can't remember."

Even if he could remember, that past had belonged to the original owner, and it had nothing to do with him. The one who was good to Yan Jin was the original owner, and the one that was constantly on Yan Jin's mind was also the original owner. He was just an outsider who'd accidentally transmigrated into this world for unknown reasons, occupying this body and assuming this identity.

He shouldn't conceal this from Yan Jin, but these words were hard to say, making him unable to speak.

Yan Jin said in a low voice, "It doesn't matter. It's fine as long as I can remember it."

Shen Zhixian sighed silently.

That night, the two sat for a long time and talked a lot.

Shen Zhixian felt that things were becoming more and more mysterious. He didn’t know how Yan Jin’s restriction came about. When he asked, Yan Jin shook his head blankly; he’d just learned about the restriction himself.

Shen Zhixian asked vaguely, "If I'm completely different from before, would you regret it?"

Yan Jin gazed at him, shaking his head slowly but firmly.

Shen Zhixian’s mood was very complicated.

He suddenly wanted to ignore everything else that was going on. He wanted to immediately find the Undead City, locate the Soul Tracing Grass, merge it with the scale, and completely heal his heart ailment. He wanted to restore the original owner’s memory. He wanted to determine what kind of person the original owner was that he was able to make Yan Jin unable to forget him even after so many years had already passed.

Yan Jin’s thoughts also coincided with his. Ever since last night, he no longer called him Sui Xian and only continued to call him Master. His manner was suddenly very resolute. “Master, let’s go to the Undead City first, okay?”

It sounded like a question, but Yan Jin added firmly, “Master’s heart ailment can’t be dragged on for too long.”

“Aside from Song Ming, there are most likely other people behind Yan Shen. I think he probably colluded with some kind of fiend...Do you remember the devil cultivator that Yan Shen colluded with at the Sword Competition? At that time, Yan Shen must have encountered something…”

“Master,” Yan Jin interrupted, gazing at him.

Shen Zhixian tried to analyze for him, “But I don’t think this matter can be dragged on for long…”

In the modern world, on the Internet, Shen Zhixian had seen too many of these types of vicious rumors. Once a false word was spread by countless people, it would take on the shape of “truth.” In the end, no one really cared what the actual truth was, as people were instead more interested in following the crowd to castigate and cast judgement.

Although he urgently wanted to know the truth about the original Shen Zhixian, he also didn’t want to let Yan Jin become the victim of this type of “truth.” Although these small sects wouldn’t be a big problem individually, if they were to work together...

“Yan Shen is dead. No one will make further disturbances, so this issue can be postponed."

“Once these small sects couldn’t find us, they would definitely go to Qingyun Sect. Song Ming made such a big move and borrowed Yan Shen to force me to appear. I’m afraid that he’d made up his mind and shredded all pretense of cordiality. I don’t know what else he intends to do.”

After thinking about it, Song Ming and Yan Jin had no direct correlation with each other. The only possibility was that once Song Ming discovered that Shen Zhixian was missing, it wouldn’t be easy for him to find someone to chase after Shen Zhixian. Thus, he could only use Yan Jin to force Shen Zhixian to appear.

“Sect Leader Song’s conduct is a little cowardly,” Yan Jin directly said. “He’s in the light, and Master is in the dark. As long as Master doesn't appear, he can’t do anything--Even if Master goes back to Qingyun Sect, you’ll have to be careful. But, once the heart ailment is resolved, Master’s safety will be absolute.

Shen Zhixian, “...”

This argument seemed very reasonable.

Shen Zhixian couldn't refute it anymore. In the end, the two forcibly reached a consensus. For the time being, they let go of Qiongyu Sect and left to find the Undead City.

Shen Zhixian’s guess was correct. After the death of Qiongyu Sect’s people, Spiritual Master Qiong Yu couldn’t find the culprit and immediately and arrogantly led a crowd of people to Qingyun Sect. But, this was a story t be told later.

Since their previous flying fish mount had already died long ago, they bought two new mounts once they’d reached a new town.

This town was not large and so the types of mounts being sold were not many. Aside from cranes, there were only civet cats and pegasus.

Shen Zhixian stared at a fluffy civet cat, remembering Duan Yuan saying that civet cat’s hair was perfect for rubbing. He immediately clapped. “I want that civet cat.”

Yan Jin chose a pegasus.

Since Yan Jin was still a poor disciple, Shen Zhixian paid for it. Afterward, he shoved a small money pouch in Yan Jin’s arms and said, “Going out, it’s not good to have so little pocket money.”

The two rode on their respective mounts and resumed their journey. Previously, the painted skin demon mentioned inconclusively that the Undead City seemed to be in the north, so they planned to go all the way north.

Soon after they left, the shop that sold the mount ushered in a sweaty bald-head monk.

The monk held half a steamed bun on one hand, puffing and panting. With the other hand, he patted the counter. After taking a deep breath, he said,

“Have you--cough, cough--have you seen someone who is this tall, looks like this….Umm, also, there’s a person who looks like this…”

After gesturing, he said, “Have you seen these two people?”

The business proprietor was confused and disoriented by him. After a while, he finally reacted and hesitantly said, “It seemed it might be those two people . They looked like what you described. They just bought a mount each and left.”

“What mount did they buy? How long ago did they leave?”

The business proprietor answered quickly this time. "A civet cat, a pegasus. They left this morning."

The bald monk pulled a bitter face and waved his hands weakly. “A civet cat and a pegasus...All I have are my own two broken legs. How can I catch up, ah….Okay, thanks.”

The business proprietor earnestly recommended, “If you’re chasing people, why not buy a pegasus?”

The monk put the remaining half of the steamed bun in his mouth, chewed, and sighed. “This monk is poor and has no money! I can only afford a few steamed buns!”

He went out with a long sigh. After looking around for a while, he bought a lot of steamed buns from a pastry shop.

The large and fresh steamed bun exuded endless temptation. The bald monk looked at the pile of hill-shaped steamed buns, swallowed the saliva in his mouth and reached out for one, wanting to take a bite.

But he held back. After struggling with himself for a long time, he finally sighed in sorrow, packed his buns, and ran after the two people.

Meanwhile, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin hastened on their journey. It was said

that there were moon white Wanggui flowers outside the Undead City. Once they found the flowers, the city should not be far away.

The two had excellent eyesight so, throughout the journey, they watched the scenery below for the flower.

However, after flying for two days, Shen Zhixuan cajoled Yan Jin into changing mounts.

The fluffy fur of a civet cat was very comfortable to rub...but it shedded too easily!

The moment Shen Zhixian sat on the civet cat, he couldn’t help rubbing its fur. But, the moment he rubbed its fur, the cat started to shed. The moment the cat started to shed, Shen Zhixian would feel the need to sneeze.

So, two days later, when Shen Zhixian saw that Yan Jin was about to climb on to the pegasus, he grabbed his sleeve and very sincerely said, “A’jin, have you ever sat on a civet cat? It’s fun. Let’s switch mounts so you can try it.”

Yan Jin glanced at him, silently switched places with him, and sat on the civet cat’s back.

Shen Zhixian got on the pegasus with satisfaction and rubbed its head--Very good. No hair loss.

He greeted the pegasus happily, then leaned his head to look at Yan Jin.

The fluffy civet looked adorable. When contrasted with Yan Jin, whose face was cold and expressionless, as he sat on the cat’s back, the overall look was...quite interesting.

Shen Zhixian struggled hard not to laugh in front of Yan Jin. He turned his head back to hide his smile. "Let's go."

Since he was able to change his mount, Shen Zhixian was very happy that

day. He was especially attentive as he looked around, not letting even a corner go unobserved.

They flew late into the evening, until night quietly descended.

Shen Zhixian was about to find a place to rest, but in the blink of an eye, he suddenly saw a large moon white flower nearby.

“Ajin.” He patted the pegasus, motioning for it to slow down, his eyes trained on the moon white flower. "Look at what's growing over there...Does it look like the flower on the demon thrush’s wrist?”

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Shen Zhixian patted the pegasus and took the initiative to land first one meter away from the flower. He looked around.

The area was a deserted wilderness, with only these random flowers swaying in the wind.

It really did look like the flower on Madam’s Meng’s wrist.

Moon white petals, slightly pale at the bottom, partially opened and partially closed. At night, it seemed to blend with the moon.

It was just that...

Shen Zhixian sniffed at the strange scent in the air and frowned. “Why did it...smell like steamed buns?”

Yan Jin nodded and pulled out his sword.

Shen Zhixian took a few steps back, watching as Yan Jin swiped gently as the flowers with the scabbard of his sword. The moment he did this, the petals fell to the ground.

Nope. It was a steamed bun.

Shen Zhixian was stunned. His gaze switched between the petals on the floor and the steamed buns. He said in bemusement, “On the ground...how can there be steamed buns?”

Yan Jin suddenly moved toward the bolder not far away. Soon after, he forced a man out from behind the stone.

It was a bald-headed monk with slanted eyes. Forced by Yan Jin’s sword, he hurriedly crawled out, yelling, “What are you doing? What are you doing?”

When he saw the steamed bun, he sighed in relief. Then, he pounced on it in distress. “My steamed buns! Didn't you see my flowers? Why did you destroy it?”

He plucked one of the remaining flower stems and a steamed bun dropped into his hand at once. He put it in his mouth, chewed, chewed, and swallowed.

Shen Zhixian asked, "Who are you?"

The bald monkey paused while he picked up another flower. After a moment, he smiled casually. “No name, no surname, just a bald monk.”

Shen Zhixian glanced at his weathered forehead and asked noncommittally, “What are you doing here with the steamed buns?”

The bald monk shoved the last surviving steamed bun flower into his mouth, rubbed his hands, and said unconcernedly, “I like this flower. Tonight, the air is fresh and the moonlight is just right. Isn’t it a wonderful sight when flowers bloom under the moon?”

Shen Zhixian glanced at Yan Jin, and Yan Jin thrusted his sword out slightly.

The sword immediately exuded a cold chill.

The bald monk wiped his face, swallowed the steamed bun in his mouth, and quickly said, “Actually, I did something wrong. This is my atonement to heaven. This flower is my offering to heaven…”

Shen Zhixian looked at this bald monk babbling nonsense and dragged out

his voice, saying, “A’jin, beat him up.”

Before Yan Jin could do anything, the bald monk jumped away, shouting loudly, “Ah! What are you doing?! Don’t respect the elderly at all!”

He evaded Yan Jin, fleeing in all directions. But, every time he turned around, Yan Jin was in his path. A short time later, he couldn’t stand it anymore. As he gasped for breath and stomped his feet, he helplessly said, “Okay, okay. Stop chasing me. I’ll speak more…”

The bald monk sighed. “I really was just passing by. The atonement is true. This flower is my favorite flower…”

Shen Zhixian casually said, “This flower could only be seen in one place, right?”

The bald monk glanced at them suspiciously. "Do you recognize this flower? This is a flower outside the Undead City. Have you been to the Undead City?”

Shen Zhixian smiled and said, “Never.”

“Then how did you know?”

Shen Zhixian followed his question with some half-truths.

This bald monk was not part of any sect and simply wandered around. By chance, he’d stumbled upon the Undead City. In recent days. He’d been walking around aimlessly. Bored, he’d used a bag of steamed buns to create the illusion of Wanggui flowers.

He mumbled, “I’m here to admire the flowers. I haven’t bothered anyone…”

Shen Zhixian’s thoughts turned silently. “We’re thinking about going to the Undead City. If you know the way, you might as well do a good thing and lead us the way.”

The bald monk frowned for a moment, then flatly refused. “No, that place is not something you can go casually. If something should go wrong, you’ll blame me. Then what should I do? "

“What can happen there?”

The bald monk looked at Shen Zhixian. “In the Undead City, there are countless big demons, small demons, and goblins of all shapes and sizes. They’re incredibly terrifying and, among these, there are also many evil…” He paused, before finishing, “fiend.”

Shen Zhixian looked at him, faintly surprised.

The bald monk seemed to know more about the Undead City than the painted skin demon. She hadn't mentioned any of these before.

The Undead City...Was it really such a place?

The bald monk saw that he seemed hesitant and waved his hand. "Forget it. You have no reason to go to such a place. If you like this flower, I can show it to you.”

Shen Zhixian said, “No, we're going.”

The bald monk still wanted to refuse, but in the end, under Yan Jin’s intimidation and Shen Zhixian’s persuasion, he reluctantly nodded and promised, “I’ll take you to the Undead City, but once you get there, if anything happens, don’t blame me!”

The bald monk pondered and looked up at the sky for a while. Finally, he chose a direction that was far from Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin’s original route. “Let’s go this way.”

Since the bald monk didn’t have a mount, Shen Zhixian rode with Yan Jin and gave him the civet cat. In consideration of the pegasus’s ability to carry two people instead of one, the three men didn’t travel very fast. As a result,

it was already dawn by the time they reached the nearest town.

It wasn’t boring along the way. The bald monk couldn’t keep his mouth shut and kept talking and talking about divination.

“So you know how to tell fortunes?”

The bald monk clutched the civet cat’s fur and smiled, turning his narrowed eyes into slits. He couldn’t help but puffed his chest. “I know divination. I’ve divined three times in my life. It was fulfilled every time.”

‘What were they?” Shen Zhixian asked casually.

The bald monk suddenly grew silent, and he rubbed the civet cat’s fur as if he was remembering something. After a while, he slowly said, “In fact, I really regretted it afterward. I shouldn't have calculated those three divinatory diagrams.”

He sighed, his expression somewhat melancholic. “The first time I calculated, I destroyed a child’s life. The second time, I destroyed my only close friend. The third time, I destroyed the world.”

The bald monk had smiled throughout their journey. Now, he suddenly became so serious. Shen Zhixian was surprised. But, after thinking about his words, he felt that it was a little ridiculous. “...Destroyed the world?”

Shen Zhixian wanted to ask more, but the bald monk laughed again. He changed the topic and no matter how Shen Zhixian tried, he never mentioned it again.

When Shen Zhixian saw this, he no longer asked any more questions, but he silently remembered those words in his heart.

Noon found them in a restaurant in town.

The bald monk tentatively said, "This meal ..."

Shen Zhixian glanced at him and put a piece of silver on the table.

The bald monk immediately laughed and yelled to the waiter, "Three baskets of meat buns--Ah, no. Four baskets!”

He rubbed his hands excitedly. “I haven’t eaten meat buns in a long time. I’ve only been able to afford steamed buns….Mmn, I don’t have anything to reciprocate. How about I calculate a divination for you?”

“Haven’t you been eating steamed buns...I thought you love steamed buns dearly.”

The bald monk merely smiled at Shen Shixian’s words. With a wink, he said, “Do you want a divination? It’s been a long time since I’ve done one. I see that you two are well matched. It could even be considered as a peach blossom fate.”

Peach blossom, a marriage predestined by fate.

Along the way, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin hadn’t concealed their intimate relationships with each other. He didn’t know if the bald monk was either too shameless or too open-minded. But, he didn’t view their relationship as strange and was even happy to give them a peach blossom relationship.

Shen Zhixian glanced at him. Anyway, the food still hadn’t arrived. He also wanted to see what type of medicine this bald monk was selling in his gourd. He didn’t refuse and merely smiled as he took a sip of tea.

He thought the bald monk would tell fortune like Xuanji Tower and draw divination sticks. To his surprise, the bald monk didn’t take anything out. Instead, he looked at them carefully, mumbling to himself. After whispering and mumbling for a time, he looked at their faces again.

It looked like he was counting.

Shen Zhixian was also wearing an illusion over his face. But, he didn’t mention it; he wanted to see what the bald monk would be able to figure

out.

The bald monk mumbled for a long time. Suddenly, he let out a short sight of joy and exclaimed. “Good! Very good!”

His voice wasn’t small, causing everyone around to turn their heads and look at them. The bald monk waved his hand, lowered his voice, and said mysteriously and secretly, “You two have very rare good facial features! I’ve never seen such a good face…”

Shen Zhixian seemed to have encountered this phrase before. Before they’d entered the secret realm, Su Cheng, a disciple of Xuanji Tower, had said something similar when he’d divined for Shen Zhixian.

He’d said that Shen Zhixian’s face was a rare good sign and that he would get what he wanted in the end.

Shen Zhixian did ended up getting what he wanted...Speaking of which, it seemed quite accurate?

In the secret realm, he got the scale. Once he came out, he--coughed--caught a little hedgehog and no longer had to worry about one day being inexplicably killed.

No matter from which perspective, it was quite accurate.

Seeing that Shen Zhixian was ignoring him, the bald monk brought his clenched fist up to his mouth and coughed a few times to gain his attention. He solemnly said, “Cough, cough, cough. Listen to me. This is a predestined peach blossom fate, blessed by the Heavens. As long as you trust and support each other, hold each other with one heart, and don’t give up…”

“What nonsense.”

The bald monk hadn’t finished speaking when a cold voice indifferently interrupted him.

The moment the bald monk heard this voice, he immediately froze. He stammered “never betray” twice, choked on the rest of his words, and, unable to continue, finally sighed in annoyance. He mumbled to himself, “Why did I meet this murderous person again?”

He helplessly spread his hands at Shen Zhixian, made an apologetic gesture, and turned to look at the speaker.

Shen Zhixian also looked over.

Sitting at the table next to them was a man in a moon white slim-fitting robe, with sword eyebrows and black eyes. His thin lips were tightly pinched, seeming to not have one speck of personality. The whole person was like a piece of ice cut out from an extremely chilly block, emitting a terrible cold.
His cold aura was different from Yan Jin. Yan Jin may have looked cold on the surface, but his indifference was merely introversion. Unless he was angry, the aura he emitted wasn’t a cold or threatening as this man before them.

Shen Zhixian found out that no one sat near him.

When the man turned his head to look at them, he unconsciously stroked the long whip coiled around his left wrist.

The long whip was crimson, and its handle was painted with overlapping fiery cloud patterns. It looked like a raging fire on his wrist, which was completely inconsistent with the cold chill he was emitting.

As soon as the bald monk saw his whip, he trembled with terror. He scrambled to his feet and moved to the chair farthest from him. “You, you, you speak nicely. This is a public place. You, you, you, you don’t hit--Ah!”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 58

The bald monk hid behind Shen Zhixian. Now that he was being shielded by Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin, he seemed to feel a lot more relieved. He loudly yelled, “Honestly, I already told you. I didn’t do anything wrong this time. You can’t hit me!”

The cold-faced man named Chen Lie looked indifferently at him. With eyes thickly laced with frost, he asked coldly, “Where is Si Fei?”

The bald monk moved his neck back and refuted him, “I already told this child. You shouldn’t be bothered with A’fei. Our family A’fei is extremely good!”

Chen Lie stared at the bald monk for quite a while before he gave Shen Zhixian a slight nod and coldly said, “Right now, his words are not right. This person likes babbling nonsense and can’t distinguish between right or wrong.”

His phrase “babbling nonsense” was aimed at the bald monk and had nothing to do with Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian had no opinions regarding his treatments of the bald monk; this was a private matter between the two of them. However, he did have an opinion on Chen Lie wanting to kill the bald monk...Therefore, he was happy to listen.

Shen Zhixian also wore an indifferent expression as he said, “Dare I ask who this person is…”

Chen Lie was accustomed to treating others with a kind of chilly arrogance. His long explanation just now was already very rare. At this time, he only said coldly, “Mingzhou, Chen Lie.”

Right after saying this, he got up to leave.

As he walked past Shen Zhixian’s table, he looked at the bald monk, his eyes showing a deep hatred. “Sooner or later, the day will come when I’ll destroy all that sin.”

The bald monk grinned at him. “It didn’t ask you or mess with you. Why do you chase after it?”

“A place that shelters evil cannot exist under the Heavens.”

After he left, the bald monk quietly mumbled, “Obtuse boy.”

“Who was that?”

“That man came from Mingzhou Sect. He’d vowed to punish evil, promote goodness, and rid the world of any defilements.” Although the bald monk spoke with a smile, there was a slight irony in his words. He sighed faintly. “He said that the Undead City is the most dirty place in the world, and sooner or later, it will be destroyed.”

Shen Zhixian lowered his eyes. “The Undead City overflows with thousands of demons and devils...so, it’s really like this. The Si Fei he’d mentioned...is a person from the Undead City?”

“He’s the Lord of the Undead City.” The bald monk chuckled. “In this world, there are too many things that may not be what they seem. It looks like this, but in fact..."

He stopped, shook his head, smiled and sighed again.

Shen Zhixian asked, "What is it actually?"

At that moment, the waiter shouted “Here it comes!” and put four baskets of meat buns on the table. The bald monk’s eyes immediately brightened and he rubbed his hands together. Too overeager, he grabbed a bun in each hand, not caring that they were still scalding hot. “He’s actually just like the bald monk. He looks like he loves steamed buns, but he actually really loves meat buns.”

He drooled as he looked at the two meat buns. “Ah, really fragrant! I love meat buns, ah!"

Shen Zhixian knew that he was deliberately changing the topic. He no longer asked and only said, “You always talk about steamed buns, so I thought you only eat steamed buns.”

“If I have money, would I be eating steamed buns everyday? Meat buns are really delicious!” The bald monk had already bitten off half of the bun and chewed quickly. “Mainly, it’s because there’s no money… I’m a penniless bald monk ... "

Shen Zhixian faintly rubbed his eyesbrows.

…...

Ever since the restaurant, Chen Lie began to appear around them more frequently.

The bald monk cried bitterly, "This guy, he probably wants to follow us to the Undead City." He sighed and sighed. "A’fei had just hidden the Undead City so he won’t find it again...A’fei is going to cut me bald. "

“You’re already bald. What are you worried about?

The bald monk began to mutter restlessly, “He is jealous and hateful. He’d experienced some things before, causing him to especially hate devils and demons. Once he sees a demon, he’ll try to kill it. He doesn’t have any measurements about good or evil. When you see him later, avoid him. When this ice block goes crazy, no one can stop him. "

Shen Zhixian thoughtfully said, "He deeply hates demons and devils, what does it have to do with us?"

The bald monk snorted suddenly. After a moment, he looked around casually and said, "Oh, where are we going? Wait a minute, I'll think of a way..."

Shen Zhixian narrowed his eyes. "Why do I think that you're always pointing your fingers randomly? What bad ideas are you thinking?"

"No, no. I'm an honest person," the bald monk repeatedly denied. His pair of little eyes squinted hard, his fingers forgotten, as he looked for the right direction. "Go, this way."

The group walked for another seven or eight days, sometimes bumping into Chen Lie. When this happens, the bald monk would speak some words in jest and laugh. Then, they would circle around Chen Lie and move on.

At first, the bald monk chattered a lot, speaking about random, useless things and never stopping. He would chatter idly all day, stuff his mouth with steamed buns, and then continue to talk. But, gradually, the longer they walked, the more quiet he became. As he rode on the civet cat, rubbing his hand over the fluff on the cat's neck, he would become lost in thought for a long time. Shen Zhixian had to call him a few times before he could recover.

Shen Zhixian felt that he was being strange. "What's wrong with you?"

The bald monk remained silent for a long time, then turned his head to look at Shen Zhixian. But he didn't answer Shen Zhixian's questions. "I have a question..."

"Yes?"

Shen Zhixian leaned back comfortably in Yan Jin's arms. Yan Jin clenched his waist steadily, firmly guarding him.

After the civet cat was given to the bald monk, they simply bought a stronger and bigger pegasus that can be double-ridden. Shen Zhixian was too lazy and preferred riding with Yan Jin, relaxing in his arms and letting him erect a barrier against the wind. As a result, he simply rested leisurely.

The bald monk asked slowly, "If, I mean if, one day the person you love completely changed to something else, would you hate him?"

He said this to the two of them, without adding any names. Shen Zhixian couldn't tell who he was asking about, but after just listening...Why did he feel so guilty?

Shen Zhixian gave a light cough and asked, "What do you mean by completely changing to something else?"

"For example, to change into something bad, like become a devil or something."

This bald monk always mentioned divination, and occasionally, Shen Zhixian thought that he'd noticed was something wrong with him. But after hearing this, he realized that the monk wasn't talking about Shen Zhixian himself, but about...Yan Jin?

Yan Jin had devil qi in his body. He repeatedly straddled on the edge of being a devil cultivator. Shen Zhixian knew this. He didn't have any different views on this. Devil cultivation and immortal cultivation were just different cultivation methods. Shen Zhixuan had no opinion on devil cultivation. After all, only a small group of devil cultivators do evil.

Even if Yan Jin became a devil cultivator, as long as he doesn't destroy the world, Shen Zhixian wouldn't care.

He said, "No."

The bald monk asked, "What if he became a devil and destroyed the world?

Would you abandon him?"

Shen Zhixian was now certain that the bald monk was asking him. He didn’t respond and, after looking at the bald monk for a moment, he wondered, “Why are you asking this kind of example?”

“Aiya, don’t worry. I'm just randomly talking about it.” The bald monk turned his head and looked toward the west. He acted like he didn’t care, but his small eyes kept sneaking glances at Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian’s intuition told him something was up, but he couldn’t guess what. He only said, “Our A’jin is very well-behaved. Even if he entered the devil’s path, he wouldn’t destroy the world.”

After saying this, he looked up at Yan Jin, who couldn't help but tightened his hold in response. He called “Master” in a low, faintly anxious voice.

Shen Zhixian said, “Entering the devil’s path is just entering the devil’s path. The basis for devil and immortal cultivation is difficult to distinguish. Although there are devil cultivating fiends who are evil, they're small in numbers. Even if there are devil cultivators who are deliberately malicious...one can also say there are also many evil-hearted immortal cultivators as well. The latter just placed themselves in a hypocritical shell and claimed it justice."

He interlocked his and Yan Jin’s fingers, then he calmly said, “It's impossible for me to hate Yan Jin just because he ended up following the devil’s path. It is even more impossible for me to abandon him.” His voice couldn’t help softening, “Our A’jin is not such a villain.”

His tone was full of confidence and trust, making Yan Jin smile faintly. The bad monk seemed to be a little moved, muttering, “What reasonable logic and rare insight. Unfortunately, there are many others who don’t always understand… What is that?”

He suddenly patted the civet cat, motioning for it to stop. The civet cat obediently stopped and landed on the ground with its four claws, its tail

waving.

Yan Jin didn’t expect for him to suddenly stop. The pegasus was running too fast so they ended up surpassing the monk by quite some distance. After taking control of the pegasus, he pulled the pegasus around and they landed.

The monk’s face displayed his internal conflict and helpless guilt. He suddenly rolled over and fell to the ground. He looked deeply at them, taking a long time to get up. His guilt had fostered complex emotions within him, and he softly said, “I’m very sorry. But, I also want to ask you both to remember your words...Please take care of each other. Afterward, if you want to kill me or cut off my flesh as punishment, this bald monk will comply.”

Shen Zhixian looked at him in surprise and dismounted with Yan Jin. He didn’t immediately respond but wondered what the monk’s words meant. Suddenly, a gale rose up from the ground, tossing pieces of sands and stones about and obscuring the bald monk’s figure.

The ground began to tremble under their feet. The earth cracked open and from within its depths rose a cold wind that carried with it many vague and strange sounds, like the roar of thousands of demons and hundreds of ghosts.

They reacted very quickly and almost immediately ran toward the bald monk. But, the land under their feet seemed to change, shifting into quicksand that began sucking them down.

Yan Jin drew his sword, but he was too late. This powerful force far surpassed what they’d encountered before. Within moments, they were completely swallowed up, leaving a huge whole in the ground.

The bad monk took in a mouthful of air and fell to the ground with a loud thump, his body covered in cold sweat. He supported one hand with the other, which was badly trembling.

“I’m sorry… I’m sorry…” His voice trembled. He choked back a mouthful

of blood and pulled out a book with shaking hands.

The book was very old and thick. It seemed to have been opened numerous times, such that the edges became worn with use.

The bald monk spread the book on the ground, mouthed a few verses from a spell and silently opened the cover page. He flipped from pages to pages, as if searching for something, trying so hard that he forgot to be vigilant of his surroundings. As a result, he didn’t notice when someone approached.

“It’s here…” His eyes brightened. He was about to tear off the page off when a cold hand with a fiery red whip appeared and picked the book up first.

“—Hey ?!” The bald monk turned pale and rushed toward him, wanting to grab the old book back.

That book couldn't be seen by others. The bald monk staked everything on one final effort of strength. But, unexpectedly, he'd managed to bump into Chen Lie after taking two steps. This caused Chen Lie to lose his grip on the book, which flew out of his hand and landed on the ground with a loud thud.

The bald monk no longer had any strengths left. He looked at the book not far away but had no energy to pick it up. He watched helplessly as Chen Lie took two steps forward and picked the book up again.

Fortunately, when the book landed, it landed closed. To unlock, the book required a secret spell. Without this spell, even if the book was opened, it would only display blank pages.

Chen Lie flipped through the book several times but to no avail. His cold eyes looked at the trembling bald monk, his voice almost congealed into ice as he said, “What is this thing?”

The bald monk looked at Chen Lie. He put down the worry in his heart,

indifferently wiped away the blood on his mouth, and smiled. “It’s a collection of bad things done by the bald monk. Why? Want to see?”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 59

In the darkness, there was a powerful force attempting to separate their tightly-closed hands.

Shen Zhixian exhausted all his strengths to hold on to Yan Jin's hand. He felt that Yan Jin was also doing the same, but they couldn't resist this mysterious power and were involuntarily forced apart.

In the darkness, he could sense that Yan Jin was gradually leaving him, falling away like sands between his fingers.

“A’jin!” he cried out, but his voice was shredded into innumerable pieces by the wind. Like this, his voice could not be heard, nor could he hear Yan Jin’s voice.

All he heard was the vague and strange howls that sounded like thousands of demons and hundreds of ghosts.

When the last bit of warmth left his fingertips. Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth, closed his eyes, and, from the bottom of his heart, summoned Frost Return’s sword spirit.

Frost Return’s sword spirit had recently been showing vague signs of awakening, but it only came in brief spurts. Occasionally, it would move like a child lazing in bed, hesitant to wake up. But now, Shen Zhixian couldn’t wait any longer. This place was too strange. He could hardly move and could only forcibly awaken Frost Return’s sword spirit as a last resort.

Frost Return Sword appeared in his hand out of nowhere. Shen Zhixian

tightly clenched the hilt, resisting the powerful force that wanted to wrest his sword away. He forced his spiritual force to converge on the sword, bit his tongue, and let out a drop of blood. “Frost Return, wake up!”

One drop of blood beaded on the sword body. In response, the body began to tremble. Frost Return’s sword spirit finally woke up from it's deep slumber. The sword spirit hissed cold and raw in his ear and, for a moment, the surrounding noises stilled.

Now that the long dormant Frost Return’s sword spirit had finally regained consciousness, it excitedly manipulated the sword blade. Shen Zhixian loosened his grip and the sword jumped around happily, its bitingly cold sword qi quelling the wind.

The thousands of demons and hundreds of ghosts and fiends that lurked in the darkness seemed to be afraid of the sword spirit. Shen Zhixian could feel the gloomy and foreboding atmosphere lessening, and even the howling voices had grown quieter.

After the sword spirit had enough of jumping around, it slammed back into Shen Zhixian’s arms, forcing him to take a few steps backward. These few backward steps took him into another world. Suddenly, in front of him stretched out a long street.

“Sui Xian Gege…” came a vaguely childish voice beside him. Shen Zhixian faintly lowered his head and a familiar young and immature face appeared before his eyes.

Shrunk….a shrunken Yan Jin?

Shen Zhixian stared blankly, then subconsciously blurted out, “A’jin?”

The boy carefully grabbed Shen Zhixian's sleeve, his face upturned, his eyes bright and clear. "... I thought you left."

The little guy tried his best to hide the fear and confusion in his eyes. But, after all, he was still young, and Shen Zhixian could see the uneasy

emotions behind those dark and bright eyes.

Looking at the face that looked exactly like Yan Jin, if albeit much younger, Shen Zhixian felt himself softening. He opened his mouth to ask him who he was. But, to his surprise, what came out was something else altogether.

“I haven’t left. I brought you candied hawthorn and sugar painting to play with.” The voice that sounded in his ears was very familiar. It was his own voice, though obviously more youthful.

This was…?

Shen Zhixian felt his gaze shifted without his control. He saw his hands holding out a stick of skewered candied hawthorns and a sugar painting the shape of a cute little wolf cub.

Then, he felt his hands handing the two sticks of candy to the little boy.

The little boy took it carefully and didn’t dare move it too much, as if he was holding precious treasures. His eyes glittered. “Sui Xian Gege…”

Shen Zhixian felt that he was going to be beggared by these words.

A hazy thought flashed through his mind and realization dawned. Was it possible? This was a scene from the original owner’s lost memory?

Can he retrace the original owner's memories inside this illusion?

Unfortunately, he was now just a consciousness and was attached to...probably the original body. He was unable to control anything and could only watch inside of this body. The sword that was in his hand a moment ago was now gone. Shen Zhixian silently tried to summon Frost Return but it did not respond.

Shen Zhixian steadied himself. Since he couldn't leave, he would simply settle down and become a bystander.

He also wanted to see what had happened to the original owner.

….

Half a month ago, Sui Xian passed by a small town and picked up a poor little child who was being bullied.

He'd always kept a respectful distance from children but, for some reason, when he saw this little guy who was wronged but refused to cry and would, instead, just clench his teeth in forbearance, he felt compassion. He guarded the little guy and drove away the wicked people. Afterward, he'd said, "Would you like to leave with me?"

The freshly baked morning food still lingered warmly in the winter chill. The child looked at him through the warm mist. Then, he hesitantly and carefully nodded.

So a big one and a little one left together.

When Sui Xian asked what the child's name was, the child froze and said, "Jing…"

The child's parents had died early, and the villagers hated him. No one would say a good word to him, much less name him. He didn't even know his own parents' last name.

All the objects inside the house had long been emptied. There were only four mottled ancient walls left and a lone well in the yard. Over time, he'd named himself "**Jing**."

His voice was too small so Sui Xian only vaguely heard a single pronunciation. He said, "Ah? Like the brilliant luster of gems, without any blemish, Jin? It's unexpectedly very good...What's your surname?"

The little guy didn't understand Sui Xian's first phrase. Regarding the question, he could only blink his eyes and shook his head. "No surname…"

He also didn’t know his surname.

Sui Xian knew that this boy had been alone and poor his entire childhood. He mumbled to himself for a while.

On that day, there was no cloud in the clear sky, making the sky seem like a wide expanse of jade. After thinking for a while, he said, “Only a name isn’t enough. A proper surname is still needed. You already don’t have a surname so it seems like it can’t be avoided. I’ll pick one for you today. Today the sky is clear...It would be better for your surname to be Yan.”

Yan, meaning clear, quiet, and tranquil, just like this little child.

The cute little guy looked at him and agreed at once without hesitation.

So, the little guy’s new name was settled. Sui Xian dipped his finger into a little bit of tea and wrote on the small wooden table the characters for Yan Jin, followed by his own name, Sui Xian.

The little guy looked at it very seriously, completely forgetting to eat the buns in his hand. He engraved the two names in his mind over and over again, until the traces of tea disappeared, and he reluctantly retracted his gaze.

Little Yan Jin was really a very good child, completely overturning the definition of "little child" in Sui Xian's heart. Previously, Sui Xian’s definition of a child was someone naughty, bratty, and constantly crying. But, hearing Little Yan Jin calling him gege even made him want to pluck off all the stars in the sky and string them together into candied hawthorn for him.

It was just that Little Yan Jin had been helpless throughout his childhood; he was used to bearing everything himself. Seeing him so small and weak, other people couldn’t resist bullying him. He could only run away silently and endure his suffering in silence. He was very worried that Sui Xian would be angry so he dared not say that he was aggrieved.

Sui Xian originally didn’t expect this. At first, he was glad that the little guy he’d picked up didn't cry, wasn’t noisy, and was very obedient and very good. But, later, when he saw other children throwing tantrums and **selling meng** in order to get what they want, and then when he looked at Little Yan Jin, who was always very good, he felt very uncomfortable.

Little Yan Jin probably had a physique that easily attracted bad people. Sui Xian went shopping and only turned his eyes away for one moment, but it was enough for Little Yan Jan to get bullied by other brats.

Covering himself with thin arms and legs, Little Yan Jin suffered the heavy blows and then run away with difficulty. He hid and waited for the brats to leave before running out to find Sui Xian.

When he ran over, he also carefully pulled down his sleeves, covering the arms that were conspicuously bruised and red from being beaten.

Sui Xian sighed, set aside the purchased items, squatted down, and hugged the child who was forcibly holding back tears and grievances. “If you want to cry, cry. Only then can I know that you’ve been wronged.”

He rubbed Little Yan Jin’s head, turning his hair into a mess, then said, “Come, let me hug you. Afterward, we can go bully them back.”

“Don’t be afraid. I’ve got your back.”

Sui Xian used his fingers to gently and neatly smooth out the boy’s messy hair.

Little Yan Jin looked at him with tears in his eyes and did not speak.

Sui Xian wanted to correct Little Yan Jin’s habit of holding everything back so he really took him to bully his tormentors that night.

Those that bullied Yan Jin were only several common children, two of whom were twins. Sui Xian was a cultivator so he was able to quietly take Little Yan Jin and slip into the twin’s room.

The twins slept soundly stretched out on the bed with the covers partially kicked off.

Sui Xian hid Little Yan Jin and himself in the shadows and called out a few soft little white clouds. He shoved the cloud to Little Yan Jin and whispered, “Shape it into a little mouse and put it on the bed.”

This was the first time Little Yan Jin did such a novel thing so he was naturally very nervous. He shaped the small, white cloud using his imagination and created a chubby little mouse.

He'd shaped the mouse slowly, but when he finished shaping the head, he realized that he’d kneaded up two mice instead.

Sui Xian’s was completely different from Yan Jin. He’d kneaded a little old rat who was stupid but very impressive. Little Yan Jin shyly wanted to hide his little mice. But, Sui Xian had already raised his hands and released his mouse. “A’jin, quickly let go of your little mice.”

Little Yan Jin pursed his lips and put the chubby mice down.

Afterward, they hid in a corner and watched as the rats crawled into the twin’s bed.

The two bratty children were awakened from their sleep. As soon as they opened their eyes, they saw three little rats crawling on them. They burt into tears and screamed loudly, “Daddy! Mom! Mom! There...There are big rats! Bohoohoo!”

Their parents were in the next room, asleep. When they heard the screams, they didn’t even have time to put on their clothes and just hurriedly ran. Sui Xian hooked his finger and the little mice disappeared into light smoke.

When the adults rushed over, Sui Xixan quietly left, holding Little Yan Jin. They could still hear the adults' scolding voices coming from the room. “Always so noisy! Noisy during the day, noisy at night! Where are the rats?

Really troublesome…”

It was cold at night. Sui Xian carried Little Yan Jin in his arms and felt the little guy tightened his hold around his neck. Then, he buried his face in Sui Xian’s neck.

There was a faint wet sensation.

Sui Xian didn’t slow down, but his eyes were softly smiling.

……

After traveling with each other for a while, Little Yan Jin’s original anxiety and restraint gradually loosened, and he gradually became more dependent on Sui Xian.

It was a cold winter and the wind was chilly. Sui Xian was a cultivator so it didn’t bother him but Little Yan Jin was too cold to sleep at night. He laid in bed, shivering under a thick comforter.

Sui Xian saw that he was freezing. After thinking it over, he opened his quilt and said, “Come here.”

Little Yan Jin looked at him blankly, not understanding.

Sui Xian caught him and pulled him under his warm comforter.

The comforter was very warm and Little Yan Jin’s chill quickly dissipated.

The room didn’t have any candles, but there was a faint, dim light coming through the thin paper window.

Sui Xian’s eyes were as bright as the full moonlight. “If you’re still cold, I can hug you.”

Little Yan Jin’s face turned red all of a sudden. He shrunk into the bed and froze. Finally, he said something unheard of, “Sui Xian Gege, I’m still

cold.”

Hearing this, Sui Xian hugged him and then, noticing that he was unable to sleep, he even hummed a minor tune to coax him to sleep.

Little Yan Jin gradually fell asleep. Sui Xian stopped and, since he wasn’t sleepy, his thoughts drifted.

When he left the sect, Sui Xian had been stagnating for a long time at the ninth level. Since he had difficulty reaching the threshold of the tenth level, his plan was to leave the sect to practice and gain experience. Sometimes, practicing can be beneficial.

But now with a little Yan Jin around, he changed his mind.

With Little Yan Jin’s permission, Sui Xian had seen his spirit root. He was very surprised. Sui Xian was already considered a natural talent in Qingyun Sect. However, Little Yan Jin’s spirit root was not inferior to him at all.

If he practiced well, his future achievements would never be low.

Sui Xian wanted to take Little Yan Jin back to Qingyun Sect.

When he mentioned this to Little Yan Jin, LittleYan Jin thought for a while. His eyes gradually brightened.

Then, he nodded solemnly.

All right. Take him back to Qingyun Sect. Although Sui Xian’s master no longer accepted disciples, it didn’t matter. He could still accept one. He’d long ago thought that Little Yan Jin would make a good pupil.

After they return...they would be in the same sect.

Sui Xian closed his eyes and fell asleep with satisfaction.

His idea was very good. But, in the end, fate had its own plans. As he was

planning to return to Qingyun Sect as soon as possible, some accidents happened.

These series of accidents destroyed all his good plans.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 60

Once these accidents started, it was endless.

First, when they passed through a small town, Little Yan Jin was falsely accused of killing a child.

A child was accidentally knocked down to the ground during a fight. He hit his head against a stone and died due to exsanguination. The child who was the culprit was afraid of being scolded by the adults and randomly blamed Little Yan Jin.

They'd tried to argue, but no one was willing to listen to them. The people in this town were narrow-minded and insular. They were paranoid and thought that this was a curse caused by visiting outsiders like Little Yan Jin.

During the scuffle that ensued, Little Yan Jin was protected by Sui Xian and was therefore unharmed. But, after they'd succeeded in leaving town, he saw the conspicuous bruises on the back of Sui Xian's hands.

Little Yan Jin couldn't help but clench his hands into fists. Usually, he wouldn't be sad even when he'd suffered grievances. But, he couldn't bear this, and his eyes became a little red.

Sui Xian saw his face and thought that he was injured. Worried, he asked, "Where are you uncomfortable?"

Little Yan Jin shook his head and said in a small voice, "I'm sorry…"

Sui Xian was surprised. After thinking about what had happened to himself,

he felt amused. He came over and took the little guy’s hand, casually saying, “You mustn’t blame yourself for other people’s faults. You didn’t do anything wrong. Why should you apologize?”

Little Yan Jin hesitated for a moment. He understood the truth in Sui Xian’s words, but this time, the person who’d been wronged was Sui Xian...The curse that he was a calamity had followed him since he far back as he could remember. This thorn, which had been hidden for a long time, suddenly burst out and pierced him fiercely.

“Sui Xian Gege, I…” He hesitated for a long time, wanting to confess everything. But, in the end, he hesitated again. He was very afraid that once Sui Xian knew of his ominous life, he would also hate him and abandon him.

Sui Xian was the first person to show him kindness. Little Yan Jin was very reluctant for Sui Xian to leave and take away his warmth. It would be too unbearable if he had to return to that previous icy world.

Looking at Sui Xian's doubtful eyes, Little Yan Jin swallowed and shook his head. He tightened his grip on Sui Xian’s sleeve. “I, I'm just afraid.”

Sui Xian didn’t doubt him. He pulled away with a smile and, after walking, he finally said, “There is nothing to be afraid of. I’m here…”

Just wait for a little while, just a little while more, Little Yan Jin thought. Just enough for him to remember for the rest of his life

This little incident caused Little Yan Jin to undergo many internal struggles. In this way, “a little while more” gradually stretched on longer and longer.

Sui Xian’s temperament was very good and, as a youth, he was easy-going and unrestrained. Although he could see through many things, he could also occasionally be very high-spirited. Whenever he went to an interesting place, he would take Little Yan Jin along so that they could play and look at the noisy sights together.

Little Yan Jin felt that he was like a bright moonlight, penetrating all the darkness and gently enveloping him in warmth.

He became deeply engrossed in such tenderness.

However, a sudden sharp blade once again brutally cut through all this happiness.

It was Little Yan Jin's first encounter with a fiend. The ugly, filthy fiend's face was malicious as it swallowed up a weak demon with unbridled, enthusiastic hunger. The sounds it made was enough to make one's hair stand on end.

It was unknown where the fiend had come from, but it looked very cruel and vicious. Sui Xian held back his unease, his muscles tightening. He concealed Yan Jin in a corner and repeatedly urged him not to come out. Then, he raised his sword and turned to face the fiend alone.

That fiend looked very fierce and, in fact, it was indeed very fierce. Its strengths far surpassed the fiends that Sui Xian had encountered before. They fought for a long time, but neither of them could manage to win the upper hand.

Little Yan Jin looked at the battle, feeling anxious and worried, wanting to help but could only helplessly curl up in this corner. Unwillingness rose from the bottom of his heart, shredding the heart into strands. The thorn that had jabbed him from time to time reappeared.

If only I was stronger, he thought, gritting his teeth.

Fortunately, Sui Xian was more powerful. The fiend gradually could no longer endure, and it retreated again and again. But, just when Sui Xian was about to kill the fiend with a single, powerful strike, a little fiend suddenly appeared out of nowhere and latched onto Little Yan Jin's body.

The cold and slimy sensation made Little Yan Jin scream instinctively. Although he'd covered his mouth almost immediately after, it was enough

to distract Sui Xian. He snapped his gaze over and saw the ball of black qi clinging to Yan Jin’s body.

Little Yan Jin was not a cultivator. If he became contaminated by the fiend, his life would not be guaranteed. Sui Xian gritted his teeth. To separate the fiend, he slashed at the black qi with his sword.

He was some distance away from Little Yan Jin. The black qi felt danger, but was already attached to Little Yan Jin’s body. Just before the sword qi severed it, a small tendril penetrated into Little Yan Jin’s body.

His face instantly turned black, and the whole person began to shake.

The larger fiend saw that Sui Xian was distracted and immediately took the opportunity to strike.

Little Yan Jin endured the pain through clenched teeth. Suddenly, his pupils enlarged sharply and he shouted hoarsely, “Sui Xian Gege--”

Sui Xian didn’t turn around and, instead, withstood the attack as he rushed to pick Little Yan Jin up. As he did so, he reverted his hand backward and used all of his strength to throw his sword at the fiend. The force of this counterattack pushed him forward a few steps and he slammed into a wall.

The fiend was almost split in half. It roared angrily. But, it hesitated and then turned and ran.

Exhausted, Sui Xian held Little Yan Jin and watched the fiend escape, not bothering to chase after it. He’d just received a powerful blow from the fiend and his qi and blood were in chaos. He gasped and coughed up a mouthful of blood.

Little Yan Jin’s situation was not good. The strand of devil qi had raged through his body and, because his spirit root was unprotected by spiritual power, he was easily overwhelmed by the devil qi. He panted and, seeing a touch of red on the ground, his pupils gradually turned a blood red.

“Sui Xian Gege…” he stammered. The self-loathing that fermented in his heart was magnified by the devil qi. He clenched his fists. “I’m sorry. I….I was born a scourge….”

Sui Xian held his hand and passed a small amount of spiritual energy to him to drive out the devil qi. “Nonsense.”

Little Yan Jin’s body was in terrible pain, but this pain could not even compare to the thorn that had taken root in his heart. He painfully muttered, “Don’t save me. Don’t save me. I’m useless. I'm a waste and am destined to bring many evils…”

The villagers had said that he’d killed his mother and father. Fearing he would bring more trouble in the future, they’d kicked him away. Now, he could see again and again and again that this was true...

Little Yan Jin began to struggle. There was only one thought in his heart. It was better to leave Sui Xian. He would rather die alone than allow Sui Xian to suffer because of him.

Sui Xian held him tightly and forced the devil qi out. “A’jin, don’t fuss.”

But, even though the devil qi was forced out, there was no noticeable difference in Yan Jin. It appeared that there was something that had been slumbering inside him and was now awakening.

Sui Xian realized that this turn of events wasn’t good. He let out a small breath and then re-visited Yan Jin’s body.

This time, he discovered something astonishing. He could faintly sense a spirit pellet inside Little Yan Jin’s body. This spirit pellet was brimming with devil qi.

Shocked, Sui Xian continued to investigate. After thoroughly searching, he finally discovered the little spirit pellet.

The red, bean-sized spirit pellet hid within Yan Jin’s blood vessel, slowly

revolving. Because Little Yan Jin had no spiritual power, once the spirit pellet was awakened, it could only gain energy by drawing the vitality from his blood.

In other words, it would suck Little Yan Jin dry.

As Sui Xian was hesitating, Little Yan Jin suddenly lost consciousness. He looked at the little boy's pale face, gritted his teeth, and condensed his spiritual power into a restriction, sealing the spiritual pellet.

The spiritual pellet was very fragile. After being sealed, it would no longer be able to absorb Little Yan Jin's vitality. Sui Xian hurriedly took his pulse and saw that he was back to normal. Then, he sighed and held the little guy in place, quietly waiting for him to wake up.

On the surface, this accident seemed to cause more fright than harm.

Sui Xian didn't tell Little Yan Jin what was in his body so Little Yan Jin didn't know. But, he speculated that Little Yan Jin might be...a natural born devil.

This situation was rare, but it was not without precedent. People born with a devil body were destined to be unable to cultivate as an immortal. These people only had two paths. The first path was to become exhausted by the awakening spirit pellet and die. The second option was to enter the devil's path and become a devil cultivator.

Sui Xian didn't hate all demons and devils. He only hated those who were evil. Little Yan Jin was obedient and hadn't done anything bad. As a result, he treated Little Yan Jin the same as always, without any difference. Though perhaps, with a bit more kindness.

But, Little Yan Jin became silent. Originally, he rarely spoke. Now, he became even more silent and would often seem as if he'd fallen into a daze. Sui Xian asked him a few time if anything was wrong, but he only shook his head and refused to say anything.

With the appearance of the first fiends, more fiends began to appear one after another. It was as if a signal had been transmitted.

Sui Xian frowned, thinking that it was very unusual. He couldn’t help but think that these fiends...were specifically blocking them?

More and more monsters intercepted them, and each monster was stronger than the next. Even if it was just Sui Xian himself, he couldn’t avoid being slightly overwhelmed. Not to mention that he still needed to protect Little Yan Jin.

After Sui Xian destroyed yet another powerful fiend, the spirit pellet inside Little Yan Jin’s body was once again awakened by devil qi.

The timing of this awakening was very unfortunate. It happened when several immortals came after the fiend. Instead of catching the fiend, they’d instead collided with the devilized Little Yan Jin.

At first, they thought Yan Jin was also a fiend. As they rushed to attack him, they were intercepted by Sui Xian’s sword. The bearded sword cultivator angrily said, “Who are you? Why are you protecting this fiend?”

Sui Xian pulled Little Yan Jin behind his body and said coldly, “The fiend is dead. He is not a fiend.”

The sword cultivator’s expression was harsh as he glared angrily at them. “Lies! Just look at him? How can any normal person have red eyes? He’s a fiend! Give him up quickly and allow us to behead this fiend in the name of morality!”

Little Yan Jin’s face was filled with black qi, and his eyes were red like blood. He was in agonizing pain, tortured by the spirit pellet that circulated around in his body. He clutched Sui Xian’s hand, teetering on the edge of collapse.

Sui Xian’s heart was burning with anxiety, but he had to calmly deal with the sword cultivators in front of him. When the sword cultivators saw that

he was reluctant to hand over the person, their face darkened and their attitude got increasingly worse.

They saw that Sui Xian was still young and, since they couldn't see his cultivation stage, they thought he was useless and incompetent. The sword cultivators decided to talk less nonsense and jumped straight into attacking.

Sui Xian held Little Yan Jin with his left arm and held his sword with his right hand. Normally, regardless of whether it was ten or eight people, he wouldn't fear fighting with them. But, this time, he was worried about Little Yan Jin, worried that a sword might hurt him. As a result, he restrained himself and didn't put his entire concentration into the fight. He was forced to retreat a few times and was almost injured.

Little Yan Jin clung to his neck, gritting his teeth with pain. He was afraid to make a sound for fear of distracting Sui Xian. But, those cultivator's mouths were not clean. First, they only scolded Little Yan Jin, but upon seeing that they couldn't beat Sui Xian, they began to also scold Sui Xian.

All these terrible words rang in Little Yan Jin's ears. A bloodied veil slid over his eyes and a force inside his body seemed to be surging faster and faster. Suddenly, a seductive voice sounded in his mind.

The fiend whose head had been detached from its body laid nearby, its dead eyes staring and its ugly face distorted with malice. Its mouth seemed to open and close.

"Become a devil...you are a natural born devil. You should destroy the human world. They deceive you and insult you. Force them all to shut up."

The spirit pellet spun frantically in his body, absorbing the vitality within his blood. Suddenly full of energy and strength, Little Yan Jin broke away from Sui Xian's arms, and a mass of black qi condensed in his hand. With a snap of his wrist, he threw it at a sword cultivator.

The sword cultivator fell backward and slammed into the person next to him. His sword flashed, slashing at the cultivator.

As the cultivators were in momentary disarray, Little Yan Jin gathered another ball of black qi, intending to throw it again. But, this time, he was blocked by a sword.

“A’jin!” Sui Xian gently shouted, a flash of anxiety snaking across his eyes. “Put your hand down!”

Little Yan Jin paused and slowly turned his eyes to Sui Xian. His voice was cold. “You want to stop me?”

A trace of viciousness flashed across his blood red eyes. It was as if he’d completely lost his awareness, not even realizing that he was looking at Sui Xian. “You’re courting death!”

Even as he blocked Little Yan Jin, Sui Xian still had to intercept several cultivators. Fortunately, although Little Yan Jin was caught up by the spirit pellet, his spiritual energy was insufficient. The moment his energy ran out, he noticeably weakened and was quickly picked up by Sui Xian.

Holding him, Sui Xian escaped. He no longer cared about the cultivators and was instead more concerned with re-sealing the spiritual pellet inside Little Yan Jin’s body. If he didn’t, Little Yan Jin would soon be drained by the spiritual pellet and die.

He was too focused on running, deeply aware that the other sword cultivators were chasing after him. As a result, he didn’t pay attention to the road and didn’t know where he was headed. He only felt that the sky was gradually getting darker, and the movements behind him seemed to be dropping further and further away.

Sui Xian let out a breath of relief and took a step forward. He suddenly felt a silent fragmentation. Darkness slid in front of his eyes and silence filled his ears, so quiet that he could hear his and Little Yan Jin’s short, rapid breathing.

He suddenly felt an ominous foreboding and stopped. He stood in the

darkness, his arms tightening around Little Yan Jin.

What he didn’t know was that, outside the darkness, the other cultivators suddenly skidded to a halt, fear flashing across their faces. After a moment, a few strands of black qi slid out of them in sequence.

Xixi: I'm halfway through reading *Want to Ascend, Then Fall in Love* and it's so good. Coincidentally, the MC's name is Shen Qingxian, very similar to Shen Zhixian. He also reminded me a lot of Shen Zhixian as well. If no one picked it up by the time I finish this novel, maybe I'll consider translating it. But, it's a little over 200 chapters. (ʘ ʘ')

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 61 part1

In the darkness, there was nothing but silence.

Sui Xian stretched out his consciousness and realized that there were no creatures around. He gathered spiritual energy into his eyes but still could not clearly see their surroundings.

He thought for a moment and decided to deal with Little Yan Jin’s issues first.

This time, he sealed the spirit pellet meticulously. Once finished, he left behind a strand of spiritual power in Little Yan Jin’s body as a means of protecting him should he meet with danger.

This entire time, Little Yan Jin still hadn’t awakened, but his breathing became much slower and more steady.

Sui Xian picked him up, put his arms around his neck, grabbed his sword, and carefully discerned which direction to take.

However, he couldn’t recognize anything. The darkness was thick and dense enough to blind people’s perception. As a result, Sui Xian could only vaguely pinpoint the direction he'd came from and tried to walk back little by little.

But, he had no idea where they were. After walking for half an hour, he still couldn’t see even a bit of light and still hadn’t found a way out.

The little hand wrapped around Sui Xian’s neck shifted slightly, indicating

that Yan Jin had woken up.

When Sui Xian noticed, he said, “A’jin?”

Little Yan Jin’s breath quietly. But, after a short while, he let out a nasally sound.

Sui Xian felt the arms around his neck tightened. Then, there was a weight on his shoulder; Yan Jin had laid his head on his shoulder.

A slight wetness penetrated the thin clothing.

Sui Xian silently sighed. He sheathed his sword, patted Little Yan Jin’s back, and asked softly, “Is your body uncomfortable?”

Little Yan Jin responded vaguely.

Sui Xian asked, "Then why are you crying?"

Little Yan Jin whispered his words, his voice helpless with despair. “Sui Xian Gege, when I...when I was very young, someone stopped by my village and divined that I was a calamity. The villagers were afraid that I would bring disaster to them and so they drove me away…”

He choked and said, “I'm always involving you. You can throw me away. I don't want to hurt you any more …”

Pursing his lips, Sui Xian stopped and put him down.

They couldn’t see each other’s face in the dark, but Sui Xian half-squatted, fumbling for Little Yan Jin’s face, and then gently wiped his tears away. He said in a serious voice, “Little child, if you think too much, then you’ll become bald. Our A’jin is very good and is definitely not a calamity. You haven’t harmed me either. Don’t speak anymore about throwing you away. I definitely won’t throw you away.”

“But…”

“A’jin, do you remember what I’d said before about going to Qingyun Sect? Actually, my master stopped accepting new disciples a long time ago so maybe he won’t accept you as a disciple…” He sensed that the little guy’s breathing had become choked and so he began to talk faster. “But, I can still accept you! I’m still a little young but it seems like you wouldn’t mind. If it’s okay, you can worship me as a master.”

Startled, Little Yan Jin’s breathing got even lighter. He hesitated for a moment before confirming, “Sui Xian Gege is asking...to be my master?”

“Yes. Although, we normally don't receive any disciples who don't have experience or haven't been tested, it doesn’t matter. The people in our division are very good…”

He wanted to cheer Little Yan Jin up so he deliberately chose some light-hearted words. Noting that Little Yan Jin seemed more relaxed, he said with a smile, “How about you practice early? I want to hear you call me Master.”

Little Yan Jin hesitated and finally called in a soft voice, “Master.”

Sui Xian was very satisfied with this. Not to mention the fact that this word came from Little Yan Jin, this was also the first time hearing anyone calling him this. He felt that it was a very novel experience. Afterward, he pinched Little Yan Jin’s cheek and straightened. Holding Little Yan Jin’s small hand, he said, “Okay, good A’jin. Let’s go.”

It was too dark here. He worried that Little Yan Jin might be afraid so he cast a small ball of little white awns.

The little white awns exuded a soft light. First, it became a fish, then a rabbit, and then finally turned into a mighty little wolf. It floated in front of Little Yan Jin, its tail wagging.

The darkness seemed to be able to devour the light and so the bright white awn could only illuminate his small palm. However, this still made Little Yan Jin feel relieved. He held out his hand and the little wolf sat on the

palm of his hand, its mouth opening in a silent howl.

“Ah-woo.” Seeing that the little white awn couldn’t make a sound, Little Yan Jin subconsciously whispered it softly.

Sui Xian smiled, his lip curving, and led the little person forward.

But, this black region seemed to be endless. They walked for a long time and still couldn’t find a way out. Little Yan Jin was very tired, but he gritted his teeth and held on until his legs became so sore that he stumbled. Sui Xian noticed.

“Tired?”

“No…”

“Let's take a break.”

As Sui Xian pulled Little Yan Jin into sitting down, he sent out a strand of consciousness, concerned that there might be movements around them. Little Yan Jin pursed his lips and didn’t say anything. He carefully sat down beside Sui Xian but didn’t loosen his hand.

In the end, their situation was still unknown. They couldn’t stay for long. After Little Yan Jin rested, they continued on. They hadn’t walked far when a little bit of noise came from behind them.

It was the sound of the wind scattering a pile of dead leaves, followed by the sound of something dragging against the ground, intermixed with a noise that sounded like a baby crying.

In the darkness, something cold was approaching them. Little Yan Jin’s heart shuddered, and he shrank into Sui Xian’s side. His hands tightened on Sui Xian’s, holding him so tightly that their clasp grew clammy.

Sui Xian saw that he was frightened. After thinking about it, he turned his wrist and brought out a long hairband.

“A’jin, wait a minute.”

He squatted down, tied the ends of the hairband on each of their wrists. After fastening the knot, he said, “Even if you accidentally loosen your hold, we won’t lose each other.”

Little Yan Jin brought over the bright little wolf. In the faint light, he could see that the hairband was embroidered with a flowing cloud pattern with white, nearly translucent gold thread. The stitching was smooth and delicate.

He’d seen this hairband on Sui Xian, which made him look very cool.

Little Yan Jin pursed his lips and cherished the flowing cloud patterned hairband.

The movements around them were not an illusion. The more they walked, the more petrifying the movements became. At the beginning, only a few weak demons and fiends came to test them. Gradually, more and more came, slithering about in the darkness.

Sui Xian quickly raised his sword and killed seven to eight monsters in a row. But some of them were still undeterred.

In the darkness, there were too many demons and monsters to count. They’d been trapped in here for so long, swallowed by the darkness. They shrank back only momentarily before re-grouping.

The howls of these creatures seemed to be endless. When Frost Return’s sword spirit saw their numbers, it was not discouraged. As a result, they killed countless demons and monsters along the way, stepping on the their foul slime.

Although these demons were not powerful by themselves, they always appeared in groups, making them more difficult to deal with. Just like how a fly was useless by itself but became annoying and potentially dangerous

when gathered in large enough groups.

Sui Xian didn’t know how long they’d walked or how many strong and weak demons and monsters he’d killed. Even Frost Return's sword spirit, which was under Sui Xian’s control, became a little fatigue. After another fierce battle, it retracted into the sword to rest.

Meanwhile, Little Yan Jin could no longer push through. He was lying on his back in a semi-coma. Hunger and fatigue had almost captured all his consciousness. But, this was not the most important thing. The most important thing was that there was no water here.

Sui Xian gave him some spiritual power. For ordinary people, their spiritual veins hadn’t been tempered so they couldn’t bear too much spiritual power. Sui Xian only gave him a little. Fortunately, Little Yan Jin was a natural born devil so his tolerance for spiritual power was stronger than ordinary people.

Although nothing would happen now, this couldn’t go on for too long.

As warm spiritual power circulated in Little Yan Jin’s body, he reluctantly recovered a little of his consciousness. He laid on Sui Xian’s back, his arms wrapped around his neck, and the hair band tied firmly on his wrist.

Little Yan Jin tried to call out Sui Xian Gege.

But his throat felt as if it’d been glued together, making him almost unable to talk. Little Yan Jin coughed a few times and a faint, rusty taste of blood swelled up his throat. He leaned his head slightly forward and faintly whispered near Sui Xian’s ear. “Leave me behind.”

“I’m...just a bad child...not...not worth it…”

With heavy, dry eyes that could no longer teared up, Little Yan Jin blinked weakly. His hands and feet were cold, and he instinctively pressed his cheek against Sui Xian’s back for warmth.

Little Yan Jin thought sadly, Forget it. Like this, Sui Xian Gege was already very nice to him, and he wouldn’t give up on him so easily. This was his fate. Sui Xian Gege was such an awesome person. Once he died, at least Sui Xian Gege wouldn’t be dragged down by him anymore and would be able to leave this place.

Sui Xian should not have been here with him.

He opened his mouth, wanting to talk, but something warm pressed against his lips and a warm liquid flowed into his mouth.

Little Yan Jin was startled. Due to extreme thirst, the body’s instinct caused him to suck and swallowed the liquid down.

His throat became slightly moisturized, and gentle spiritual force fell into his belly along with the liquid, which greatly eased his discomfort.

Little Yan Jin finally registered the thick, bloody smell and he exclaimed in an astonished voice, “Sui Xian Gege!”

"Shh. Don't talk." Sui Xian’s voice was slightly hoarse. He retracted his hand, placed it against his own lips, and licked away the blood.

They’d been trapped in this weird place for a few days. During those days with no water, he could only give Little Yan Jin a little blood from time to time.

Frost Return’s sword spirit was also very tire after constantly fighting. In these places, devil qi lingered everywhere. Even a slight movement will cause the sword spirit to be awaken. As a result, Sui Xian sheathed the sword.

The wound on his wrist was opened and reopened so many times, each time in a slightly different position. Over time, a small piece of raised scar tissue was formed. Even though the expanse of scar was uneven and ugly, Sui Xian didn’t care so long as Litte Yan Jin was fine.

Little Yan Jin struggled against him, wanting to walk on his own. But his hands and feet were weak; his whole body was weak. This so-called struggle only encompassed a slight movement.

Sui Xian lightly patted his butt and said, “Don’t move around.”

He mildly added, “Don’t forget, you’re my disciple now.”

His tone was calm, as if he was just commenting on the good weather. Little Yan Jin felt scalding hot throughout his body, the heat making his heart hurt. His hands shook slightly and his hoarse voice said, “Master…”

He paused and once again said, “Sui Xian Gege…”

“Mmn. Very obedient. Once we get out, I’ll buy you pork steamed buns to eat. You didn’t eat enough last time. Next time we go out, you should eat it all…”

Little Yan Jin’s nose grew sour, and he let out a nasally sound of agreement.

The two encouraged each other in this way and walked for a long time. Gradually, the demons and fiends became less and less. Until, suddenly, there appeared a glimmer of light far away.

Sui Xian perked up. “A’jin. Look. There’s light over there.”

Little Yan Jin didn’t respond. He’d passed out again and was breathing weakly.

Sui Xian clenched his teeth and walked quickly. The faint light was far away and, occasionally, it would brighten and glimmer, like...moonlight reflecting off of water?

After remaining in the dark for so long, the faint light made the eyes uncomfortable. Sui Xian couldn’t help but close his eyes. After moving spiritual power slightly around to cloak his eyes, he opened them again.

Here, the land was wild and overgrown with weed. There was no devil qi nor spiritual qi. His own spiritual power had been nearly exhausted, and there was really not much left to squander.

After adjusting to the light, he quickly walked forward.

Upon seeing the light, he thought that he'd finally arrived at the edge of this dark domain. But, when he came near enough to take a closer look, he realized in surprise that there was instead…

A serene and calm sea in front of them.

Xixi: My workplace was shut down due to COVID-19, but as a government employee, I currently still have to report to work. I was hoping to have more time to translate and post up more chapters for those of you who have to shelter-in-place or are on lockdown. I hope everyone stays safe and healthy throughout this pandemic. My heart goes out to all the countries and people affected. Jiayou!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 61 part2

It may not be accurate to say that this was the sea. But, Sui Xian looked into the distance and could not see the water’s edge. Because there was no wind here, the water’s surface was very smooth and still. It was very calm, as if the stagnant water had a bottomless floor underneath.

A half-moon hung slanted above the sea, it’s dim lights bright enough to only illuminate the shore. The cold moonlight faintly penetrated the darkness. It seemed to hug the juncture between light and dark, casting looming, indistinguishable shadows that blurred into the brightness.

There were several small white stones by Sui Xian’s feet, all in various lengths and sizes. Without thinking about it, he kicked them into the water. The stones silently sank to the bottom, creating rippling circles that spread out dark and heavy on the water’s surface.

Sui Xian was worried.

The road back was dangerous, but the path in front was a boundless sea.

He still hadn’t decided what to do yet when the water's surface suddenly trembled. A large ripple cascaded out from the distance, crashing against the shore. There was no wind, but in the distance, a wave of water surged up. It emitted a rumbling vibration that carried with it an exceedingly dangerous breath.

Sui Xian gazed at it attentively and cautiously took two steps back.

A massive spray of water exploded out as a wicked four-clawed dragon

burst out from the water. It roared, shaking out seven to eight columns of water that crashed down. The ground shook.

Sui Xian’s face paled.

This wicked four-clawed dragon was a twelfth-tier demon beast, which made it nearly three-tiers higher than Sui Xian.

He carried Little Yan Jin on his back and quietly disappeared into the darkness. The wicked dragon hovered over the water’s surface, when it suddenly hummed. As if it’d sensed something, it snapped it’s head forward and saw Sui Xian, who was still trying to hide.

It’s round pupils dilated into sharp, needle-like lines, and its voice was dull. “Food?”

Its tail swayed, slapping the water. It excitedly soared over, its pupils full of greed. “Delicious…”

Sui Xian knew that it was too late to escape. He put Little Yan Jin down. Frost Return unsheathed and instantaneously collided fiercely with the dragon’s claws!

The wicked dragon didn’t expect the little cultivator, who looked weak and feeble, to have the ability to block one of its claws. It growled angrily and twisted its body, flinging its tail toward Sui Xian.

This single attack brimmed with the power of a thirteenth-tier demon beast, the strength enough to crush an ordinary person’s body into mists.

Sui Xiian didn’t look at it and only mobilized a bit of spiritual power to try to lead it away from Little Yan Jin’s location.

Sui Xian had never been in such a desperate, miserable situation before.

He was innately smart with astonishing talents. He’d been a well-known genius since he was a child, and with the help of top cultivators, he'd made

rapid progress. Among his peers, he stood out as an unmatched talent.

To gain experience and to improve his cultivation, he'd challenged many high-level demon beasts and had struggled for life and death. But, he'd never been in this kind of situation…

The chance of victory was negligible.

Logic told him he should avoid battling with the dragon. Even if he was in top shape, he may not be able to escape from the dragon's claws, much less at this moment when his spiritual power was almost exhausted.

But he couldn't retreat.

If he retreated, what would happen to Little Yan Jin?

Inside his body, his **spirit pellet** was spinning chaotically, squeezing that last bit of spiritual force from the veins of his spirit root. Pain blossomed throughout his body, causing the hand gripping Frost Return to tremble. Only his strong willpower prevented him from losing consciousness and kept him awake to fight back against the wicked dragon.

The wicked dragon was very powerful and had long dominated this area. It hadn't met such a strong opponent in a long time. He was blocked time and time again by Sui Xian, which only increased his rage. "I'll eat you! This is what you get from obstructing me!"

Immortal cultivators had a foul smell. It didn't like to eat them at all and would only consider eating one or two when forced. At this moment, it only wanted to eat the natural born devil on the shore. Natural born devils was rarely seen in thousands of years. After eating the natural born devil, it would become stronger.

It would become so mighty that….maybe it could even break free of its shackles and leave this place that had imprisoned it for hundreds of years!

Sui Xian gritted his teeth and fought back, refusing to allow it to hurt Little

Yan Jin. He collided with the wicked dragon again and again. No matter how strong his sword skills, it was only backed by a bit of strength. Therefore, in the face of strengths that outpaced his own, his sword skills weren't even worth mentioning. The wicked dragon managed to successfully land an attack, causing darkness to sway in front of Sui Xian’s eyes. He coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“...This ancient secret method can instantly increase your cultivation, but its effect is very short and will only cause endless troubles. My disciple mustn’t use it no matter what.”

The words that Master once said a few years ago suddenly sounded in his mind. Sui Xian’s vision was becoming blurry, making it difficult for him to see, but his mind was very clear.

So clear that it wasn’t difficult at all for him to activate this secret method.

When the last spell was cast, he felt scalding hot all over. His veins forcibly expanded, and his spirit pellet spun so fast that it almost looked like a specter of itself. Spiritual force surged one after another from within his spiritual sea, which roiled and seethed in bellowing waves. Extreme agony crushed him even as he felt his barrier shattered.

He’d been promoted!

Tier ten--Tier eleven--Tier twelve.

Even if he’d only crossed three tiers, he would still be able to fight!

Sui Xian and Frost Return were tightly bound. The sword issued a loud, sharp hiss as innumerable sword qi condensed into a massive murderous sword qi. It shot toward the wicked dragon!

The wicked dragon noticed the danger and tried to dodge, wanting to escape to the bottom of the sea. But, it was too slow and had no time to avoid the attack. The giant sword qi stabbed the wicked dragon’s tail, and a shower of blood burst out, emitting a fishy stench.

Sui Xian controlled the sword's movement and, without pause, the sword swung back and sliced off one of the dragon's claws!

"Aaaoooo----"

The wounded dragon twisted back and forth along the water's surface, stirring up great waves. It was enraged and unwilling to retreat. Once the giant word qi had dissipated, it rushed into the water. The huge dragon head hung down, its eyes raised to stare with resentment at Sui Xian. "If I don't kill you, I would never be able to dispel the hatred in my heart!"

After using his sword qi, Sui Xian's internal strength was rapidly draining. Gasping violently, he stepped in front of the wicked dragon and stared at it.
.

Blood oozed from where the dragon's claw had been cut off, but it totally disregarded it. As it spoke, its deep voice was full of malice, "The natural born devil is a big supplement. I've been eating enough half-devils to make me sick. Today, I've finally found a rare and delicious delicacy. First, I'll kill you and then I'll eat him—Who dares to touch my food?!"

The huge dragon head suddenly swerved sideways and, at the point of light and darkness, something crawled out. It fell on to the comatose Little Yan Jin.

—It was an ice-cold skeleton.

—This pile was made up of all the leftover demon bones, and the skeleton was one of them.

A cloud of black qi lingered between the bones, controlling its movements and making it stiffly grasp on to Little Yan Jin's neck!

Sui Xian was completely shakened. He turned back, angrily drawing his sword, and slashed at the skeleton. The skeleton was thrown far away and shattered into many piles of small bones.

But Sui Xian had finally exhausted his last remaining strength. His legs softened, and he could no longer remain standing. His knees buckled and hit the ground, his sword tumbling down next to him.

The wicked dragon saw this and no longer cared about him. Instead, he took this opportunity to splash up a wave of water, which rolled toward Little Yan Jin and sweep him into the sea.

A haze of darkness had fallen across Sui Xian's eyes, nearly blinding him. But, he instinctively felt Little Yan Jin float pass him, and he reached out and hugged the smaller person into his arms.

The current dragged them to the bottom of the sea.

As water rushed over and around them, their eardrums swelled. A massive pressure instantly pressed them down. However, Frost Return's sword spirit created a barrier around them, barely protecting the two of them.

But Frost Return's sword spirit was connected to Sui Xian. After he'd suffered such severe injuries, the sword spirit would naturally also be greatly affected. It was only able to support the barrier for a short while before the barrier suddenly burst.

Water rushed in from all directions, and the cold moonlight above gradually faded away into the distance. They began rapidly sinking into this icy undersea of purgatory. Sui Xian held Little Yan Jin with one hand, desperately swimming back up, holding his last breath tightly in his chest. The suffocation nearly made him collapse.

Little Yan Jin's breath was also getting weaker and weaker. When Sui Xian realized this, he turned his head slightly, groped for Little Yan Jin's face, and covered his cold lips without hesitation. He passed on that last breath.

Suddenly, the surface opened up with a splash, and Sui Xian, who was on the edge of passing out, finally burst to the surface. He gasped, heavy with exhaustion, and dragged Little Yan Jin by the hand to shore.

He first pushed Little Yan Jin ashore. But, as he tried to climb ashore himself, panting hurriedly, he found that he was unable to.

Something dangerous was approaching at great speed. Frost Return trembled. The sword spirit protected its master wholeheartedly and used its final strength to slash fiercely toward that source of danger!

Just as the wicked dragon's claw pierced Sui Xian's chest, it was immediately severed. The wicked dragon bellowed with rage, wanting to swallow Sui Xian no matter what.

In that moment, the heavy cloak of darkness was suddenly lifted and dazzling light poured in. A familiar figure rushed forward. Seeing the scene before him, the person's eyes widened, and he shredded the wicked dragon's body with his sword. With one arm, he lifted Sui Xian out of the water.

"Sui Xian! Disciple child!"

Sui Xian was delirious with pain and on the verge of fainting. He heard his master's familiar voice and his heart eased. Then, in the next moment, he twitched his fingers and grabbed on to Sect Leader Wen's sleeve. "Master, A'jin...bring...bring A'jin with…"

Blood poured from the corner of his mouth. His body was in terrible shape, and his bloodied chest was gravely wounded and nearly pierced through by the wicked dragon's claw. He'd only managed to mumble a few words before he choked and had to violently cough up a few mouthfuls of blood. His face was like golden paper, with only a breath of life left.

Sect Leader Wen was so anxious that he didn't bother to understand what Sui Xian was talking about. His fingers pressed against the large hole on Sui Xian's chest, but it was useless. While transferring spiritual power to Sui Xian, he fed him a life-saving pellet with his other hand. But, as soon as the pellet entered Sui Xian's mouth, he coughed it back up with another mouthful of blood.

Sect Leader Wen’s eyes flashed. He hurriedly hoisted the half-conscious Sui Xian up and turned to leave. In his anxiety, he didn’t notice that there was a small child lying near by his feet.

Nor did he notice that, on one of the bones he’d stepped on, a strand of cold, black qi had quietly climbed up, coiling along Sui Xian’s ankle. It traveled up, using the blood and the dim light as camouflage, and plunged into the bloody wound on Sui Xian’s chest.

Sui Xian’s hand, which had originally been tugging on Sect Leader Wen’s sleeve, grew rigid. In the next instant, it lost all strength and quietly fell limply.

Xixi: Gotta admit, I got a little teary eyed. All that hard work and, in the end, Yan Jin still got left behind in that darkness.

Spirit Pellet - synonymous with spirit core. HuanXu at Wuxiaworld posted an interesting and enlightening article about the usage of “core” and “pellet” if you’re interested in reading.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 62

One after another, various memories tumbled like a tide through Shen Zhixian’s head, sweeping up the long-forgotten past. It made him muddle-headed, made him feel as if he’d come back to life.

In fact, that feeling was true.

As he dragged himself back from the memory of the illusion, he was distracted and despondent. After a long time, he suddenly pulled his sword and lashed out. The sword qi swept across a cluster of flowers, breaking numerous flowerheads and sending them scattering all over.

Shen Zhixian gasped for breath and gradually calmed down. From his mind emerged the thought of the “original owner.” Really, truly absurd.

He’d always thought that he was an outsider who’d transmigrated into a book. But, this turned out to be false!

He was the true person!

On the edge of that strange sea, Sect Leader Wen rescued him but also ended up taking away the half-devil soul that was attached to the bones.

At that time, he was seriously injured. He was struggling on the edge of death and had only a breath left. Halfway to Qingyun Sect, that half-devil seized his body.

Meanwhile, Frost Return’s sword spirit was affected by his master, and it was also greatly injured in battle with the wicked dragon. It fell into a deep

sleep. And thus, the truth was hidden.

Working in concert with Fourth Elder, Sect Leader Wen tried his best and used countless elixirs before he was finally able to barely save the person. But, Sect Leader Wen wasn't happy for long.

After the half-devil won his body, it was unable to fully integrate with Sui Xian's memories. It only vaguely knew the little bit of recent memory but didn't know much about Sui Xian's past.

It was half-human and half-devil and had a very humble identity. It belonged to a miscellaneous class that was neither recognized by demons nor accepted by humans. The mind of these types of beings, who'd struggled as a bottomfeeder all their lives, was easily twisted.

In a moment of inattention, the half-devil's body was swallowed by the wicked dragon. It only had a trace of residual soul left. It was unreconciled and unwilling to leave. After working so hard to claim such an excellent body, it was naturally unwilling to lose it.

In order not to expose itself to Sect Leader Wen and the others, the half-devil pretended that it was too seriously injured and had lost its memories. For a while, it was able to deceive everyone.

It was just that this body was Sui Xian's. Sui Xian's talent was not just due to his spirit root. The half-devil was just a mediocre half-devil. It barely managed to act as Sui Xian and so it wasn't too surprising that Sect Leader Wen would perceive that something was wrong.

This was the first time Sect Leader Wen encountered such a situation. He was unable to thoroughly understand it. He wanted to probe the matter out, but the half-devil was wearing Sui Xian's body and so he didn't dare recklessly instigate it. Because of this, his hands were tied, and there was nothing he could do.

The half-devil was very excited at first. It had finally found a good body and would no longer be ashamed of its status. But, it soon turned out that,

because of the wicked dragon’s claw, the body’s heart veins were too damaged. Even Sect Leader Wen and Fourth Elder could not heal it. This body could no longer grow in cultivation.

The half-devil was unwilling and tried multiple times, only to receive a backlash that resulted in a heart attack that nearly pushed it to its death. This body could no longer cultivate normally.

Someone else in the sect began to feel that something was wrong. In order not to alarm the half-devil, Sect Leader Wen could only blame the heart ailment.

Everyone knew that Sui Xian had great ability. After all, he was already appointed to become the next sect leader. This time, Sect Leader Wen took the opportunity to cancel this appointment, saying that Sui Xian had a heart ailment and could no longer assume the sect leader position.

Later, many things happened. As the current Shen Zhixian recovered his memory, he couldn’t help but feel confused and could only quickly captured the individual memories that trickled forth.

Soon after, Sect Leader Wen’s promotion failed, resulting in the qi deviation that led to his death. Song Ming became the Qingyun Sect Leader, even though he wasn't Sect Leader Wen’s inheriting disciple and was only superficially addressed as senior brother by Shen Zhixian. In fact, he was just an ordinary disciple who’d somehow won Sect Leader Wen’s favor, resulting in his appointment as the next sect leader.

With Sect Leader Wen gone, the half-devil breathed a sigh of relief. There was no one to suppress it anymore. Over time, it became more irritable and hot-tempered. Its temperament turned cloudy and its behavior became more and more strange. As a result, everyone in the sect avoided it.

Then later, by chance, the half-devil met Little Yan Jin, which was 13 or 14 years old at the time.

It almost instantly recognized him and instinctively wanted to avoid him.

But, it looked at Little Yan Jin. It saw that he was ignorant and that he was looking at it without any familiarity at all in his eyes. It hesitated.

Little Yan Jin only knew Sui Xian, who'd changed his appearance when he left the sect to gain experience, and so he didn't recognize this Shen Zhixian from Qingyun Sect.

The half-devil probed him with one or two sentences when no one was around and was relieved to find that Little Yan Jin didn't know what happened. Most of his memory was lost. Let alone what happened later, he could only vaguely remember this person named Sui Xian.

The half-devil remembered the words that the wicked dragon had said and remembered that Sui Xian had praised Little Yan Jin's inner talent, intelligence, and outstanding spirit root. In that moment, hatred was born, and he accepted Little Yan Jin as a disciple without hesitation.

Sui Xian had originally said that he wanted to accept Little Yan Jin as a disciple and wholeheartedly wanted to teach him. But, now the body's core had changed. The half-devil accepted Little Yan Jin as a disciple, if only to torture him to vent his unwillingness.

Little Yan Jin was a natural born demon. Although his spirit pellet was sealed, he still had a good spirit root. The half-devil didn't teach him at all, leaving him to attend lecture and fumble around by himself.

After the half-devil took Little Yan Jin as a disciple, it didn't bother venting on Little Yan Jin unless he didn't appear in front of it. Until, one day, he heard a junior disciple whispering that Little Yan Jin was very talented, just like Shen Zhixian when he was thirteen.

The half-devil heard these words and resentment and unwillingness boiled in its heart. It was a half-devil whose status was humble and not worth mentioning, and its qualifications were even worse. It couldn't make progress no matter how hard it worked. The more people talked, the deeper its hatred. Because of these praises, it decided that it mustn't allow Little Yan Jin to advance any further. It began to intentionally make things

difficult for Yan Jin.

Its actions became more and more ruthless.

Later, it used the discipline whip on Yan Jin and, even after severing Yan Jin’s spirit root, it wasn’t lenient at all.

This was what happened in the original book….or rather, what happened in his last life. This was the pain that Yan Jin had endured.

When Shen Zhixian thought of this, his eyes grew red with distress. He wished he could tear that half-devil to pieces. The hand gripping his sword trembled violently, gripping with so much force that blue tendons appeared on his fair skin. He stumbled to his feet and was about to go and find Yan Jin when a quiet sigh came from the side.

“The flowering period for Wanggui is short and lasted for only a few hours. This cluster has just bloomed and you’ve ruined it. It was innocent.”

Shen Zhixian turned his head. Standing not far away was a young man dressed in a dark-red robe with a jade ribbon in his hair. His face was like precious jewel. He looked over at Shen Zhixian with a smile and clasped his hands in greeting.

Shen Zhixian looked down at the Wanggui flower scattered around his feet and raised his eyes to look at the youth. He asked quietly, “—Undead City?”

The bald monk's words rang in his ears, and he added: “Si Fei?”

Si Fei didn’t appear to be surprised. The wind bellowed his fiery sleeve as he raised his fingers. In a flash, a small Wanggui flower bloomed quietly from his fingertips. “Yes.”

The bald monk appeared to be familiar with Si Fie, and it was precisely the bald monk who’d lead them to this place before letting him fall here. Shen Zhixian’s mind turned sharply, and he asked, “Where’s the person with

me?”

There was a trace of complexity in the youth's eyes. But, the smile on his face didn’t falter. “When you came here, you were alone. What to do--Wait, let's talk. Don’t draw your sword. These flowers are so beautiful. It would be a pity to ruin them, wouldn’t it?”

Shen Zhixian raised his sword and pointed it directly at the youth. He didn’t know if it was caused by the secret technique but, after he’d restored his memory, his cultivation level had leaped forward and allowed him to directly break through to the twelve tier. At this moment, his entire body was agitated, causing his sleeves to bellow. Shen Zhixian’s voice changed from mild to ice-cold. “Where is he?”

No matter if their actions to help restore his memory were done with good intentions or malicious intentions, he only wanted to quickly find Yan Jin.

Si Fei was silent for a moment. He turned his head to look at the flowers in the distance. He was still smiling but it’d obviously become a shade cooler. He said, “Shen Zhixian doesn’t know where this place is?”

“Thousands of years ago, demons grew unrestrained across the land. At that time, a group of immortal cultivators joined forces to drive countless demons into the Wasteland in a concerted effort to suppress them. Then, they opened a sea here to separate the Wasteland, casting a dark seal that prevented these demons from seeing the sky.”

Shen Zhixian reluctantly held back his anxiety and listened to his words for a moment.

These words...

Si Fei didn’t wait for him to respond, and continued: "After thousands of years, those immortal cultivators fell down one by one until there were hardly any left. As a result, the power of the restriction seal continued to weaken, and cracks gradually began to appear. Occasionally there would be a few little demons who were able to escape from these gaps.”

"Here lies the edge of the restriction seal."

When Si Fei said this, Shen Zhixian's grip tightened on his sword hilt. His immediate thought was to wonder, did he and Little Yan Jin somehow walked through one of the cracks and into the Wasteland?

In those days, they were chased every day by demons and devils. In fact, it was precisely because they were being chased. Shen Zhixian didn't have time to think about what direction he was heading. Coincidentally, he'd managed to break into the restriction seal by walking in between the cracks?

Shen Zhixian felt that something was strange about this, but now wasn't the time to mull over this matter. He asked coldly, "What does that have to do with us? I'll ask again, where is the person who was with me?"

Si Fei turned his gaze back and took a deep breath. With this breath, it was as if a difficult decision had been made. "He is in the Wasteland."

A gale suddenly rose from all directions. A single Wanggui flower broke off in the middle, the piece falling past the cold sword and grazed Si Fei's neck. The youth remained motionless. His eyes drifted close.

"The seal of the wasteland will soon fall apart. Once the countless demons and monsters from within see the sun again, it will bring bad news for all living beings under the heavens. The natural born devil is rarely seen in thousands of years. As a natural born devil, only he could maintain the seal and keep the thousands of demons and monsters inside."

Shen Zhixian was extremely angry and said hatefully, "Other people's life are just other people's life, not his! Where is the restriction seal?"

Si Fei said nothing and raised his hand. A Wanggui flower twined around his fingertips, bud half opened. His finger moved slightly and the stamen poured out a moon-white ray, which wrapped around Shen Zhixian's wrist.

Shen Zhixian felt a cool sensation on his wrist. He only had enough time to see the smile on Si Fei's face before the world turned upside down. The flowers and the youth suddenly disappeared. In front of Shen Zhixian's eyes was a handful of soil. Growing on that soil was a very familiar-looking green grass bud.

A small wooden plaque was planted next to it. Shen Zhixian looked at the three powerful characters engraved on the plaque.

Soul Tracing Grass

Shen Zhixian stared blankly.

This grass looked exactly like Xiao Caoya. The number of leaves were exactly right. Even the twisted posture was exactly the same as Xiao Caoya!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 63

After the silence was restored, Si Fei looked at the flowers scattered everywhere. His smile faded, and he sighed.

Only when the bald monk hiding in the shadows saw Shen Zhixian disappear did he dare to walk out, his face showing a look of shock. “I saw him put the sword to your neck and was afraid that, if his hand shook, you would…”

Si Fei spread his hands indifferently. “If I could die like that, that would be all the better.”

The bald monk remembered something, touched his bald head, and stopped talking.

Si Fei felt that the atmosphere had suddenly become serious. He tilted his head and looked at the bald monk with a relaxed smile. "Shen Zhixian is not like Yan Jin, who would initiate a crazy attack, as if he wouldn't even recognize his own relatives. He won’t kill me. Don’t worry...You should worry more about that person in the Wasteland.”

He waved his hand and the pile of flowers displayed an image.

Inside the image, the light was dim and the barren field was faintly visible, displaying the wreckage of demon beasts and fiends scattered everywhere. The area was thick with devil qi. A person had his back to them. His body exuded oppressive, murderous energy as he slashed his sword, cutting the attacking demons into pieces.

—It was Yan Jin.

He was too fierce. Except for some irrational little demons who came forward to die, the bigger demons were somewhat hesitant to engage him.

These demons were not completely stupid. The more powerful the demons, the more they knew how to keep their lives. As long as Yan Jin stayed there, killing as many demons as possible with fierce means, he would become more and more powerful and would quickly rise through the ranks.

Several demons and fiends in the Wasteland looked at each other, then bowed their heads unwillingly before him and made a gesture of surrender.

Yan Jin didn't have the slightest expression on his face, only showing a look of indifference and savagery. He declined to react as demons swore allegiance to him left and right. As if sensing that someone was peeping at him, he turned sharply and looked right at them, his blood-red eyes heavy with oppression. It was as if he could see them and would make a move at any moment to attack the bald monk and Si Fei.

He carried his sword, the blood on it still dripping. His body was thick with devil qi.

The bald monk shivered. Although he knew that Yan Jin couldn’t see them, he subconsciously hid behind Si Fei. Carefully popping his head out to look , he said, “Oh, don’t look at me, don’t look at me. This bald monk is very timid. So scary...Why did Yan Jin look so terrifying after he turned into a devil? More fierce than the last time I saw him…”

He rubbed his hands nervously and said worriedly, “There’s no second strain of Soul Tracing Grass--What’s that?!”

Because he was so shocked, his voice was a bit sharp. He looked in surprise as Yan Jin suddenly raised his hand, and a ray of green light spread out on his palm.

It turned into a small grass bud.

The grass bud bounded in his palm. It was difficult to hear what it was saying, but the heavy oppression in Yan Jin’s eyes actually dissipated. The murderous aura, which was thick enough to be tangible, also slightly lessened. He flipped his wrist and the small grass bud burrowed into his sleeve.

The flowers landed, and the image disappeared.

The shock on the bald monk's face still remained: “Soul Tracing Grass? Why did Yan Jin have another Soul Tracing Grass?”

He subconsciously tried to reach for something in his sleeves. After patting for a while, he smacked his head. “Chen Lie snatched my book!”

Si Fie heard what he said and frowned in disapproval.

The bald monk’s smiled looked like a grimace. “Ah, A’fei, the monk can’t beat the ice cub. You go and help the monk get the book back.”

Si Fei flatly refused. “No. Too lazy. Don't want to fight.”

The bald monk twisted a bit. “Otherwise, A’fei, how about you go and play the beauty scheme… As the saying goes, once the hero is sad about the beauty…”

Si Fei’s face turned green, and he knocked angrily on the monk’s bald head. “Get lost!” He cursed with a laugh, but his smile didn’t reach his eyes.

As the monk was about to say something, his expression suddenly froze. Something cold had landed on his head. He reached out and touched it, then watched as a large swath of snow suddenly fell from the sky and soon covered the ground.

It was the restriction seal that had been in effect for thousands of years. It’d finally broken down. The seal had turned into flakes of snow, falling down and down.

“A’fei, the restriction is broken…”

“Yes...those things are coming out.” Si Fei looked blank for a moment, then he soon revealed a sly smile. “Did you say just now that Chen Lie is still guarding outside?”

The bald monk hesitated.

“Mmmn. Very good. He’ll work hard.”

The fat and thin figures disappeared quickly.

In a secret room somewhere in the city, Shen Zhixian had just merged the Soul Tracing Grass. His expression was absent-minded.

He already knew that Xiao Caoya was very special. But, he never imagined that it was...the Soul Tracing Grass who probably initiated his rebirth.

In the last life, he’d failed to survive in Yan Jin’s hands. Then, was the rebirth in this life due to the Soul Tracing Grass?

Who found the Soul Tracing Grass and worked so hard to regenerate him—No, Yan Jin was also reborn. Could it be related to him?

There was only a handful of soil left. The small wooden plague on which the characters “Soul Tracing Grass” was written had turned into powder soon after Shen Zhixian absorbed and merged the grass into his body. He circulated his spiritual power, and his mood turned complicated as he carefully examined his heart pulse.

The moment the Soul Tracing Grass merged with the half scale, the injuries to his heart and veins were completely repaired. This long forgotten sense of comfort made him anxious to go out and find someone to fight with.

Once he found Yan Jin, he must have a good fight with him. Before, because he was suppressed by the heart ailment, he couldn’t fight.

There were walls on all sides with a single, closed door. Shen Zhixian pushed open the door without hesitation. The moment he stepped outside, he became blinded by the snow.

He tilted his head slightly to avoid a snowflake and found himself standing on a long street.

This place was no different from other ordinary towns. It had brick buildings, hanging red lanterns and limestone streets. The only difference was that the residents here were at all not human.

In the cold wind, several little demon cubs wrapped in thick, cotton jackets laughingly ran past Shen Zhixian. Cute, fluffy ears flickered in the wind.

Was this...Undead City?

Shen Zhixian looked around and saw an old tree demon with its back turned toward him. The demon was struggling to pull up its roots. After changing into a more comfortable position, it shoved the roots back into the soil and saw Shen Zhixian. “Oh, a new young man.”

Shen Zhixian turned back to look at it. There was a dry, wrinkled old man’s face on the trunk of that old tree demon. It happily hummed half a tune and, seeing that Shen Zhixian was looking over, it sighed and said kindly, “Still getting used to this place?”

Shen Zhixian's face showed a little doubt, pretendeding to be puzzled. “What's this place?”

The blankness on his face was just right. The old tree demon believed him and said, “This is Undead City. We also called it Carefree City, where you won’t have troubles, and you’ll be happy every day. ”

At this moment, a few more demons passed by, and the old tree demon greeted them happily. Shen Zhixian took the opportunity to talk to them. The demons and monsters here didn't even know Si Fei, let alone the bald

monk.

Shen Zhixian thought that this was strange. The creature here didn't seem to understand what trouble was. Every face was smiling, and there didn't seem to be any negative emotions. How could this be possible. Even if it was a newborn baby, it would also cry and make noises!

He also noticed that the engraved pattern of the Wanggui flowers could be seen everywhere. Under the eaves of every door was the flower's engraved pattern. There was a faint breath flowing in the pattern, and when Shen Zhixian carefully observe it, he realized that it was a little familiar.

—This was very similar to the moonlight that flowed from the flower on Si Fei’s fingertips.

He strongly suspected that Si Fei had carved these patterns.

The Undead City should be connected to the so-called Wasteland border. Based on Si Fei’s attitude, it was likely that Undead City was the last line of defense in this wasteland.

For thousands of years, the restriction seal had long been riddled with cracks. The bigger demons couldn’t pass through those cracks, but there were many smaller demons who could.

The reason Si Fei built Undead City here was probably to deal with the smaller demons who’d escaped.

Even as Shen Zhixian was making countless guesses in his heart, his face showed none of his thoughts. As he was about to say goodbye to the old tree demon, the old tree demon suddenly let out a whine, shook its tree body, scattering many dead leaves. "Who hit me?!"

It pulled out one of its roots and used it to pick up a stone that had rolled over

There was a small piece of paper tied to the stone with a red string. After

looking at it for a long time, the tree demon handed it to Shen Zhixian. “I don’t know how to read. You take a look.”

Shen Zhixian took the stone and paper. He undid the string, unfolded the paper, and saw the first sentence at the top: “To Immortal Master Shen.”

He froze slightly and continued to look down at the paper.

The paper was thin but long with a rolled up paper attached. Looking at the writing style, it seemed like that bald monk was the writer. In the first half, he expressed his apology and only in the second half did he carefully mention Yan Jin.

The paper said that the Wasteland had been sealed for thousands of years, and there were countless demons and devils imprisoned within. They were difficult to deal with. The reason why Yan Jin was sent to the Wasteland was because Yan Jin was a natural born devil, and only he had the ability to live there long term.

It was like sending a lion into a forest to invade the entire forest and disallow the beasts within to arbitrarily leave.

Shen Zhixian's hand clenched, crushing the stone into powder, which caused the old tree demon to shrank back.

He continued to read the last bit on the paper. It also said that the restriction seal on the Wasteland would soon shatter and allow numerous demons to escape. They also asked Shen Zhixian to help in destroying these demons.

As for where Yan Jin was at this moment, they already…didn't know.

Shen Zhixian’s face sank. The old tree demon was curious but, looking at his cold aura, it decided to keep its mouth shut for the sake of survival and only watched silently as Shen Zhixian left.

Seeing Shen Zhixian’s back disappeared, the old tree demon yawned lazily and nearly nodded off before a sound jerked him awake.

“Very bad. I forgot to unlock the spell!” A bald monk ran anxiously in front of it, his fat hands waving in panic. After a while, he sighed with relief. “But, fortunately, this calculation actually took a turn for the better…”

He slowed down and walked away.

The old tree demon stared at him stupidly, watched him walk away, and this time, it completely closed its eyes and fell asleep.

But on Shen Zhixian’s side…

In fact, Shen Zhixian hated Si Fei's actions very much. He squeezed the paper scroll tightly with his fingers, wishing to shred it all over their faces. But he couldn't find Si Fei and the monk, nor could he find Yan Jin.

He did have the idea to use the contract to locate Yan Jin. He didn't know if it was because Yan Jin was too far away or for whatever reason. But, when he urged the contract, he could only feel that Yan Jin was safe and secure. He couldn't ascertain his position at all.

Fortunately, at least he could sense that Yan Jin was not injured; otherwise, Shen Zhixian would have already overturned the Undead City.

In that case...he might as well return to Qingyun Sect first.

If Yan Jin wasn’t in trouble, he’ll eventually inquire about Shen Zhixian and would learn that he’d returned to Qingyun Sect.

This would save them both from looking for each other and completely missing each other.

From the moment he’d met Yan Jin, he’d become used to them working together on all kinds of things. Now, without Yan Jin, he always felt upset.

Shen Zhixian hesitated, his fingers rubbing the paper subconsciously. He felt a little strange when he touched it.

He raised his hand for a moment and carefully opened the paper scroll. The paper looked thin and fragile, as if it would break when touched. But, in fact, it was extremely durable.

But there was nothing on it.

Shen Zhixian rubbed the paper carefully, and a familiar aura faintly circulated on the paper, making him instantly remember Sect Leader Wen.

He frowned and carefully confirmed it. Indeed, there was the lingering breath of Sect Leader Wen on the paper. More specifically, it was precisely the scent of Sect Leader Wen’s sword.

Sect Leader Wen failed to promote several years ago, resulting in his death, and his sword had also shattered. It'd been so many years. Why was he now sensing the lingering breath of Sect Leader Wen and his sword?

The mystery of his death seemed to be getting larger and larger. At that time, when Sect Leader Wen died, Shen Zhixian’s body had already been seized by the half-devil and so he was completely ignorant of the details surrounding his death. Song Ming and the other elders were the ones who had dealt with it.

Shen Zhixian calmed down. Making up his mind, he left Undead City and rushed back to Qingyun Sect.

Along the way, as the note had said, there were many demons and fiends on the road. Although Shen Zhixian was in a hurry, whenever he see these demons causing trouble, he would stop to deal with it.

That day, Shen Zhixian was thinking about the blank paper. As he passed by a forest, he saw another immortal cultivator besieged by several fiends. The cultivator was pitiably outnumbered.

After Shen Zhixian beheaded two to three fiends, the cultivator turned around to thank him. Shen Zhixian whispered, “Immortal Master Su

Cheng?”

Wasn’t this Su Cheng, the disciple from Xuanji Pavilion that he’d met by chance?

Shen Zhixian was still wearing Sui Xian’s face. At first, Su Cheng looked startled, then he greeted him in surprise, “Are you also a cultivator?”

Shen Zhixian smiled slightly and mildly said, “At that time, there was some trouble and I had to hide my identity. Please don’t be angry”

Su Cheng waved his hand and laughed, “Aiya, I understand, I understand. It's not a big deal. I’m not angry. I want to thank you for saving my life.”

Shen Zhixian turned sideways to half-evade his bow, smiled, and started talking to him. Now that they'd met again, he asked a few more questions about the current situation.

Su Cheng said, “Recently, there has been a faint resurgence in demons, some of which had been running rampant. Although I’m not very powerful, it’s still okay to cut off a few little demons and devils.”

The two hurriedly exchanged a few more sentences and, since each had their own important matters, they turned to leave. However, as he was turning around, Su Cheng happened to see the piece of paper in Shen Zhixian’s hand and blurted out in surprise, “Destiny Paper?”

Shen Zhixian turned his head to look at him.

Su Cheng knew that he’d been rude and apologized. He said, “I’m sorry… I suddenly saw this long lost Destiny Paper and was shocked for a moment… Can I ask where this paper came from?”

Shen Zhixian thoughtfully passed the paper to him. “It was a gift from someone. You recognize this paper?”

Su Cheng carefully grasped the thin paper and turned it over in careful

study. "This is indeed the Destiny Paper! It has the breath of that uncle!"

Shen Zhixian asked, “Your martial uncle?”

Su Cheng abruptly shut his mouth, obviously somewhat annoyed with himself. However, the words had already been spoken out and, in front of him, was the one who’d rescued him. He looked around, saw that there was no one else, and whispered, “He’s not considered a martial uncle. He was a grandmaster from a long time ago who was expelled from Xuanji Pavilion…our sect. He uses Destiny Paper.”

He paused, revealing an expression of embarrassment, which indicated that he didn’t want to say any more. Shen Zhixian didn’t embarrass him and said, “Then, do you know what’s wrong with this paper?”

“Destiny Paper can reveal the past or the future. But, you need to be extremely talented in order to use it. There’s a spell on it. Although I can’t completely unravel it, I can still make the content reveal itself.” Su Cheng was obviously very confident about his skill. He asked, “Can I give it a try?”

Shen Zhixian made a gesture for him to proceed.

Su Cheng responded with an “okay” and, after performing some complex signs, he pushed the spell on to the paper. Sure enough, an image gradually emerged from above the paper.

Su Cheng was an honest person. When he saw that a faint pattern had appeared, he immediately looked away. “Good.”

Shen Zhixian looked at the pattern, took a deep breath, and kept his face calm. He thanked Su Cheng, who waved away his politeness. The two said goodbye to each other and left in opposite directions.

After waiting for a while, Shen Zhixian stretched out his hand. The piece of paper in the palm of his hand had a pattern of a sword painted on it, which flowed with a faint aura.

The pattern was Sect Lord Wen’s sword.

And in it was a remnant of the sword spirit.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 64

Shen Zhixian was feeling very irritable lately.

The first reason was that he'd beheaded too many demons and eliminated too many devils, which will inevitably affect his mood; the second reason was that he had no information on Yan Jin's whereabouts; and the third reason was that...

The day he tried to communicate with Sect Leader Wen's broken sword spirit, he saw a vague image.

It was the scene where Sect Leader Wen suffered a qi deviation while in retreat. Aside from Sect Leader Wen, there was another figure partially hidden in the image.

Using his sword, an unknown man was sneakily destroying Sect Leader Wen's painstakingly arranged protective formation.

However, this was, after all, just a ray of a broken sword remnant. The image only flashed briefly before disappearing completely.

Shen Zhixian clenched his fist, his heart ice-cold. Even though he'd only seen half of the sword, it was enough. He recognized that it was Song Ming's sabre.

Sect Leader Wen's death really was related to Song Ming!

Previously, Shen Zhixian only had a vague suspicion. Now, he was almost certain of Song Ming's guilt.

Song Ming was initially just an ordinary disciple. However, after Shen Zhixian’s body was seized, Sect Leader Wen saw that Song Ming was very diligent and hardworking. He then accepted him as a disciple and passed the sect leader position to him, wanting him to take more care of Shen Zhixian.

But who knew...

It was only at the last moment that Sect Leader Wen clearly saw the wolf’s ambition and the heartless scorpion under Song Ming’s gentle face.

Shen Zhixian rushed for a few days. By the time he arrived in Qingyun Sect, night had gradually shaded the sky darker. He was well acquainted with Qingyun Sect's restrictions. Moreover, since Sect Leader Wen had deliberately opened the back door for him, something Song Ming didn't have the capability to change, he was able to silently enter the sect.

He didn't go back to his own peak. Instead, he went to Shilian Mountain.

The last time he was here, Yan Jin had altered a formation, causing them to be teleported to this place. Right now, as he looked at this familiar scenery, his mood was complicated.

This was the place where he’d naughtily ran over when he was a kid. The demon beasts here were more powerful and so it was usually not open to new disciples for trial. When he was a kid… In Sect Leader Wen’s words, he was like a little jumping cat.

He liked to jump where all the excitements were and go where he shouldn’t go. Relying on his own excellent cultivation and quick-wittedness, he’d quietly slipped into this mountain area.

The demon beasts here were much more powerful than the little demon beasts outside the rest of the mountain. After Little Cat Shen Zhixian secretly observed this place, he felt that he might be capable of fighting them and so, no matter how many, he would catch each demon beast and fight with it.

He stayed here for a few days, messing with a group of demon beasts to the point of tears. When Sect Leader Wen found out that he'd came to this place instead of going into retreat as he ought to, Sect Leader Wen hurried in to rescue him. The moment he was taken out, all the demon beasts celebrated for three days.

However, soon after discovering that he'd received no injuries, Sect Leader Wen was relieved and no longer restrained him. "Those demon beasts are all quite resistant. Since you're not afraid, it's also good to go and move your muscles."

So, he took off for a few more days.

The demon beasts were not at all happy to see Little Cat Shen Zhixian return, waving his tail and looking for a fight.

Demon beasts, "....."

Over time, the demon beasts here would run the moment they saw Shen Zhixian. To them, little Shen Zhixian brought too many nightmares. Even after so many years, this practice still existed, so when he and Yan Jin came here last time, the demon beasts continued to avoid him.

He thought he'd transmigrated into a book at the time and it was Yan Jin's protagonist's halo that was making the demon beasts act that way.

As Shen Zhixian remembered the past, nostalgia flashed through his eyes.

He walked all the way to the place where they'd previously found Sect Leader Wen's illusion. This flat land was also a place that he'd particularly liked when he was younger. Whenever he become tired after fighting or practicing, he would often come here to rest, to find solace in the peace and quiet.

Sect Leader Wen knew this place and had even visited him here several times.

Sure enough, there were several illusion stones here.

These illusion stones were locked with a restraint that only he could open. Shen Zhixian quickly unlocked it and a glimmer of light flashed. Sect Leader’s Wen voice appeared in front of him, his figure slightly transparent, almost like a mist.

Shen Zhixian's eyes grew slightly moist, and he could not help murmuring, “Master…”

By the time Shen Zhixian left the mountain, the night sky was pitched black.

Although he came out with a calm face, his heart was heavy with depression.

He’d never so thoroughly hated anyone before. Regarding the half-devil seizing his body, he could only blame himself for his own lack of strength. But Song Ming...

Shen Zhixian threw a punch at the tall tree next to him, causing the tree to shake and the leaves to scatter down. He hadn’t bothered protecting his hand with spiritual power and the bark was hard. Blood trickled down his fingers and slowly fell to the ground drop by drop.

He totally disregarded his injury; it was, after so, a minor insignificance compared to the heavy pain in his heart.

Suddenly, he understood why Little Yan Jin had wanted him to leave him behind so many times and why Little Yan Jin persisted in saying that he was dragging him down.

If it wasn’t for him allowing his body to be seized by a half-devil, why would Master worry so much? How would Song Ming have the opportunity to scheme against Master and cause him to die so terribly?

Shen Zhixian's hands trembled and tightly fisted.

At this moment, he felt so confused. He wanted to kill Song Ming immediately, but logic told him that he needed to keep Song Ming alive in order to find out the truth. Regardless of whether Song Ming schemed against Sect Leader Wen or whether he merely schemed against Yan Jin, these were all things that he would pay Song Ming back one by one.

Shen Zhixian stood there for a while. Suddenly, he raised his hand and executed a spell, transforming his face into Sect Leader Wen's face, before striding out.

.....

The main peak of Qingyun Sect.

This was the place where Sect Leader Wen lived, and where Song Ming lived right now.

Because it was night, a lone candle burned inside the house, the single flame flickering with no wind.

Song Ming sat in front of a table, his face dark while the candlelight cast his shadow on the wall. The shadow was superfluous, as if there were two shadows.

"What should we do now? There's been no sighting of Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin for a while. They weren't forced out even after we caused such big troubles for them. But they somehow still managed to force Yan Shen to his death." Sing Ming's voice was angry. "Now, everyone is busy killing demons and fiends everywhere, lessening the problems that Yan Shen had planted."

"What is there to worry about? Yan Jin is a natural born devil. As long as we instigated him into becoming a devil, he would kill people without any efforts from us. Wouldn't this be enough? As for Shen Zhixian…" Song Ming's mouth was tightly closed but another raspy and cold voice came out

of his body. “I want this body. I’ve never encountered anything that fits me like this. I blame that merman for meddling into other people’s business…”

Song Ye was annoyed when he heard this voice. He couldn't help but slap the table, causing the table to make a muffled sound. He said cold'y, “You can’t go and stay with another junior disciple? Why did you have to come to me?”

“Oh...if I hadn’t taken over Shen Zhixian’s body for so many years, you wouldn’t have the chance to take this master position. You should be grateful to me.” The raspy voice let out a creepy laugh. “Your body is also good. If I can’t return to Shen Zhixian's body, it wouldn’t be too bad to stay with you.”

Song Ming’s face showed his impatience as he scolded “Get lost!.” But, just as he was about to continue talking, the candle’s flame suddenly flickered and burst. Song Ming turned his head sharply toward the window. “Who?!”

The closed window squeaked and then slammed open from the outside. The wooden bolt, which had originally kept the window closed, broke in two and fell to the floor with a dull thud. Song Ming’s heart jumped with an ominous hunch.

It felt as if something terrible was about to happen. Once the window was fully opened, he saw the person standing outside the window!

It couldn’t be human.

Song Ming was terrified. He jerked to his feet and shouted in a trembling voice, “Master...No, Sect Leader Wen…”

Although this face had disappeared for many years, it had always haunted his dreams at midnight. The familiar face unexpectedly appeared before him again!

Song Ming’s forehead turned cold and sweaty. Meanwhile, the half-devil hidden in his body remained silent. The half-devil naturally recognized Sect

Leader Wen. When Sect Leader Wen was alive, he had feared facing him with Shen Zhixian's body. Now, he also dared not make any trouble.

Sect Leader Wen stood outside the window, not entering. He merely glanced at them with an icy gaze. After looking at Song Ming for a long time, the corners of his mouth suddenly lifted, and he softly said, "I'm back, Song Ming."

This voice was exactly the same as Sect Leader Wen, causing Song Ming to subconsciously take a step back and bumped into the table. Not caring about the pain, he clenched his teeth and watched as Sect Leader Wen quietly drifted away. A moment later, he squeezed out a sentence through his teeth, "He, he's back…"

.....

After assuming Sect Leader Wen's appearance to "see" Song Ming, Shen Zhixian decided not to disturb the other elders. Fourth Elder had worked hard with Master to rescue him that year and could generally guess most of his situation. He'll talk to Fourth Elder tomorrow regarding any follow-up matters.

After experiencing so many revelations, his mood was in constant turmoil. Shen Zhixian felt tired from the depths of his heart.

When he returned to his room, he looked around silently.

He'd announced his seclusion so no junior disciples had come up during the time he was gone. Although he'd placed a restriction, it was probably destroyed when Song Ming discovered that he'd left and came to snatch his puppet wood.

As a result, all kinds of objects were scattered about.

Shen Zhixian looked for a while. In the empty room, he was alone. There was no Yan Jin, no Xiao Caoya, no sounds at all, turning the peak into a very lonely place.

There was only a cup of cold tea on the table.

Shen Zhixian went out and gently touched the jade bed that Yan Jin had bought for him. Brushing off the fallen leaves, he laid down on the bed, exhausted.

In the night sky, the stars flickered silently. He stared at them for a while, and the wash of sadness overcame him again.

Shen Zhixian was actually a person who could regulate his mood. He usually never allowed himself to become addicted to a certain emotion. But, this time, he was really too uncomfortable. Various emotions roiled in his heart, making him want to talk to others.

But he was alone.

Shen Zhixian took a deep breath, slowly released it, and closed his eyes.

He slept fitfully, his dreams a strange, chaotic jigsaw of all sorts of past events. The dreams brought more discomfort, causing his brows to furrow in agitation.

The last dream started when his heart was pierced by the wicked dragon’s sharp claw and ended on the final scene of Sect Leader Wen’s anxious and worried face.

Shen Zhixian suddenly jerked awake, his chest violently undulating. He panted quickly, a drop of cold sweat rolling down his forehead.

At this time, the night was the darkest before dawn. He opened his eyes and was startled to see someone standing by the bed.

It was a very familiar figure. The man held an outer coat in his hand and was about to cover him with it.

Shen Zhixian instinctively grabbed the person’s wrist. But then, he saw a

pair of blood red eyes, and he murmured, “A’jin.”

Yan Jin paused. He seemed to remember his appearance and tilted his head uncomfortably, not wanting Shen Zhixian to see his eyes.

But Shen Zhixian suddenly released his hand and lifted his arms toward him. In the darkness, Yan Jin couldn’t see his expression very clearly, but he could hear him choked out a word full of aggrievement. “Hug.”

Xixi: The next chapter is only about 3.5 pages long so I managed to finish translating it in time to add to today's update.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 65

At this time, Shen Zhixian was not the current Shen Zhixian; he was just the high spirited youth of that year.

His originally noble and easy-going youth was cut short when his splendid life became fate’s big joke, convincing him that he never was himself. That the young man Sui Xian wasn’t him.

After so many years and after experiencing so many things, he’d finally regained his complete youth.
But this young man, Sui Xian, could no longer be as easy and unrestrained as he once was. He’d lost too many things and, under the surface of his calm return, he was riddled with scars.

Shen Zhixian felt his nose go sour. His eyes were hot, and all kinds of emotions billowed in his chest, causing him to be unable to stay calm.

Yan Jin froze for a moment, then reached out and pulled him into his embrace.

Just like, long ago, when Sui Xian had embraced Little Yan Jin.

Shen Zhixian hooked his arms around Yan Jin’s waist and buried his face in his arms, listening to his strong heartbeat. He held back tears, trying to calm his emotions.

Yan Jin didn’t say a word. He’d never been good at talking and couldn’t say interesting words like what Sui Xian had spoken to Little Yan Jin. He could only do his best to give Shen Zhixian a warm hug.

Shen Zhixian didn’t know how long they stayed like that. Eventually, he drew back and was about to loosen his hold on Yan Jin and straighten up. But, at that moment, Yan Jin lowered his head and raised his hands to cup Shen Zhixian’s face and turn it slightly upward. Then, he placed a gentle kiss on each damp corner of Shen Zhixian’s eyes.

Shen Zhixian was caught off guard. He felt Yan Jin’s hot breath on the corner of his eyes and subconsciously lifted his head. Yan Jin’s lips fell on his cheek.

His ears instantly turned red, and he hoped that, in the dim light, Yan Jin wouldn’t be able to see too clearly. He leaned back slightly, reached out to hold Yan Jin’s hands on his face, and asked, “What are you doing?”

His tone was calm, with a slight nasally sound. But Yan Jin didn’t speak. His hands went down, one arm wrapping around Shen Zhixian’s waist while the other hooked under his knees. Then, he pulled him closer and lifted him up.

Being suddenly carried princess-style, Shen Zhixian was startled and let out a sound of surprise. He subconsciously wrapped his arms around Yan Jin’s neck. “Put me down…”

Yan Jin carried him to a spot not far from the cliff and set him down there, one arm still wrapped tightly around his waist.

Shen Zhixian gazed out into the distance. Although his memory had been restored, it didn’t negate the fact that he’d tripped down the stairs and fallen to his death. He was still somewhat apprehensive of height. He glanced once down the seemingly bottomless cliff's edge and leaned back into Yan Jin’s embrace.

He could guess what Yan Jin wanted to do. Before, he’d said that he wanted to see the scenery here, but he was afraid of heights. Yan Jin probably wanted to accompany him and help him realize his little wish.

Although the dark night was fading, the stars were dim, and there was nothing much to look at, Yan Jin’s heartfelt intentions made Shen Zhixian feel a lot better.

Yan Jin raised his hand and spread his palm.

A cloud of green light emerged from his palm. Shen Zhixian froze, watching as the familiar little grass bud materialized in Yan Jin’s palm. He said, “This is also...Soul Tracing Grass?”

Yan Jin said, “mmn,” and softly added, “I’ve only recently found out.”

The meaning of his words were unclear. Shen Zhixian couldn't tell whether he’d recently just discovered that Xiao Caoya was a Soul Tracing Grass or that he’d just recovered his memory and knew something.

Xiao Caoya was asleep for a long time and had just recently woken up. It happily jumped from Yan Jin’s palm to Shen Zhixian’s shoulder and used a strand of his hair to slid down. “Chirp! Chirp!”

When Xiao Caoya left, Yan Jin’s palm closed and opened again. This time, a peach branch appeared in his palm.

There were still three or four peach blossoms on the flowering branch, one of which was blooming and was preserved by some technique to stay at the most beautiful moment.

When Shen Zhixian saw this flowering branch, he hesitated and said, “This is …”

“This is the flowering branch that Sui Xian gave me in the secret realm,” Yan Jin said softly. There was a faint smile in his voice. “I’m very happy and like it a lot.”

Shen Zhixian also remembered. This was indeed the small peach blossom branch in the secret realm. He’d turned the branch into a sword, and he later gave it to Yan Jin.

The small peach blossom branch was far from perfect, especially since he'd used it to kill those little ghosts. He'd given the branch to Yan Jin, not taking it to heart. He thought Yan Jin would throw it away, but who knew that he would preserve it like a precious treasure and keep it for so long.

Shen Zhixian suddenly felt a little regretful. He grabbed Yan Jin's sleeve and said seriously, "This flower is not good. I'll gift you a more beautiful one."

Yan Jin didn't speak. He merely pull the branch in front of him and gently inserted the end into the soil. He whispered, "Xiao Caoya."

Xiao Caoya let out a loud chirp and reluctantly swung from the end of Shen Zhixian's hair. He spun around the flower branch, turning in circles. A faint, green light gradually merged onto the branch.

That branch grew taller and taller and eventually became a sturdy peach tree. Peach blossoms emerged and burst open, some blooming while others in half-bloom. A breeze drifted past, scattering the soft petals across Shen Zhixian's eyes.

Shen Zhixian was stunned. A moment later, he looked at Xiao Caoya, who was sitting on the ground tiredly, panting. He sighed, "...Xiao Caoya is really amazing."

Xiao Caoya heard this and became excited. It jumped up again, proudly throwing out its leaves and twisting its body.

Shen Zhixian saw its triumphant gesture and laughed. He light-heartedly pulled Yan Jin to sit under the blooming tree, saying teasingly, "This seems like such a romantic setting. Too bad there's no moon."

This scene was very good, taking his mind away from the previous troublesome things and allowing him to laugh and joke. He cherished this moment of joy.

Yan Jin glanced at him and said, “If Sui Xian wants it, then he shall have it.”

He pointed his finger and wrote a strange incantation. Shen Zhixian didn’t know what spell Yan Jin casted but he faintly felt a barrier rising from the ground and turning the tree into a shroud.

The surrounding scenery suddenly became hazy, and then little by little, small star-like lights gradually appeared in the air, bright amidst the darkness. These lights gathered into a luminescent round moon, which slowly rose up into the night sky.

Shen Zhixian raised his head to look at the bright moonlight. With a gentle smile, he raised his hand to catch a ray of moonlight. With a sigh, he said, “A’jin is all grown up and can make people happy now.”

As he looked at the bright moon, Yan Jin looked at him intently, as if looking at the rarest treasure. “Sui Xian, are you happy?”

“Happy.”

Shen Zhixian replied with a grin. When he turned his head to talk to Yan Jin, he found that Yan Jin was too close to him. As he turned his head, his lips almost brushed against Yan Jin’s lips

He leaned back slightly, instinctively trying to avoid contact. But, Yan Jin placed his hand on his back, making him unable to withdraw.

Yan Jin's gaze fell on his lips, and Shen Zhixian immediately guessed what he wanted to do. Normally, he would allow him to, but...

Shen Zhixian's eyes shifted to Xiao Caoya, who was no longer shaking its leaves. Instead, it was staring at them intently. He reluctantly said, “...Xiao Caoya is watching.”

Yan Jin supported his back with one hand, while the other hand stretched backward. The outer coat was still lying on the jade bed. Yan Jin raised his

hand slightly.

The wind brought the coat over, along with the peach blossom petals that had landed on it. As the coat drifted over their head and gently settled over them, petals showered down on them.

Just as a petal brushed against Shen Zhixian’s lips, Yan Jin leaned in slightly and pressed his mouth against Shen Zhixian’s mouth, holding the petal in place.

Covered under the coat, Shen Zhixian fell into darkness.

He lifted his head and the slight confusion in his eyes turned into a gentle smile as he silently caved under the onslaught of Yan Jin’s mouth.

Hot breath. The scent of peach.

At this moment, these sensations became his entire world.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 66

When Shen Zhixian woke up, it was already bright.

The sun was scattered through the leaves, the lights shattering over his body. Shen Zhixian opened his eyes lazily and found that he was lying on the warm jade bed. There was no moon or flower in front of him, let alone the person who'd embrace him last night.

He laid still for a while, until a ray of sunlight fell into his eyes. He blinked uncomfortably and gathered his thoughts.

...Where did that person go?

Shen Zhixian turned and sat up. The peach tree Xiao Caoya had spawned was gone. He didn't know if he was imagining it, but he could still smell a faint scent of peach.

"A'jin?" he called. He got off the bed and, not caring about his messy clothes, hurriedly pushed open the door into the house. He searched around, backed out, and looked around outside.

However, there was only a breeze on the edge of the cliff, and no one responded.

Shen Zhixian's footsteps gradually slowed down. He leaned on a tree and looked at the coldness in front of him. He suddenly laughed and shook his head with a sigh.

It turned out...to be a fantastical dream?

So that kiss that felt so real and so warm was but a fantasy in his dream?

There was no trace of Yan Jin anywhere here.

Shen Zhixian rubbed his eyebrows, cleared his mind, and used the sect's communication method to call the junior disciple that he hadn't seen in a long time.

Ming Yi's morning class had just ended. He went back to his room for a meal and was preparing to practice his swordplay when he received a message. He choked, froze for a long time, and suddenly jumped up, causing his head to slam into his bed frame. He shouted in pain, startling the disciple next to him.

"Senior Brother Ming Yi? What's going on?"

Ming Yi rubbed his head and scrambled to fix his crooked hairband. Then, he hurriedly opened the door and rushed out. "Elder Shen's seclusion is over."

Just like that, he was gone.

The disciple stared at the still-moving door with a stunned expression. After a short while, he responded. "Elder Shen's out from his seclusion?!" Not even bothering to grab his sword, he ran out in a hurry.

When Ming Yi hurriedly reached the peak, Shen Zhixian had just finished smoothing down the folds of his robe. Unable to hide the joy on his face, Ming Yi respectfully saluted.

Shen Zhixian inclined his head, signaled that he need not be polite, and asked a few questions about the situation in the sect.

Ming Yi deliberately spoke the truth about the situation regarding Song Ming and Yan Jin. "Since you've gone into closed door seclusion, Senior Brother Yan went out to travel and hadn't returned yet. Earlier, there were

some bad rumors outside, saying Senior Brother Yan...has hurt many people, causing several small sects to come several times to make trouble."

When the rumors had just started, Ming Yi was stunned. He didn't believe that Senior Brother Yan would do such things. But the opponents were very fierce and even pulled out an illusion stone. All the evidence pointed steadily to Yan Jin, making it difficult to refute.

"Sect Leader Song visited Fifth Peak several times, but since you haven't come out yet…"

Since Yan Jin had caused such a big problem and Shen Zhixian, who was his master, was in seclusion, Song Ming had no choice but to issue a warrant for Yan Jin's quick return. At the same time, he also had to sooth the other sect's anger, convince them to wait patiently, and promised to gather facts and give everyone an explanation.

Shen Zhixian listened for a while and said, "Have the smaller sects been causing troubles lately?"

He shook his head. "No. Demons and fiends have been causing troubles in recent days. Most people went back to their sects, and Senior Brother Yan's problem wasn't mentioned as much."

Shen Zhixian murmured in acknowledgement, certain that it was partly because Yan Shen was dead.

Without Yan Shen, Song Ming couldn't leave Qingyun Sect nor could he extend his hands so far outside to cause trouble. Without new victims, those few small sects wouldn't dare provoke Qingyun Sect too much. Therefore, they wouldn't continue to make so much noise.

Song Ming was probably annoyed to death. He'd wanted to use Yan Jin to force Shen Zhixian to appear. But, he'd made too many mistakes. At this moment, it was probably impossible for him to be content with stopping halfway. Based on Song Ming's nature, as long as Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were still hidden behind him, he wouldn't dare act rashly.

If things hadn’t changed so much, Shen Zhixian might make secret plans to slowly and clearly resolve Song Ming. But now, Shen Zhixian was overflowing with anger; he had no patience to stretch matters too long. He just wanted to use the shortest time possible to make Song Ming pay the price.

Shen Zhixian’s expression became indifferent and he no longer asked any more questions. He merely permitted Ming Yi to clean up while he turned to go down the mountain.

However, after taking just a few steps, Ming Yi hesitantly called out to him.

Shen Zhixian turned his head back, Ming Yi hemmed and hawed and, even after some hesitation, he didn’t say anything in the end. Instead, he pointedly touched his temple and ran way like a rabbit.

Shen Zhixian froze and raised his hand subconsciously. His fingers brushed past the hair on his temple, grazing against what felt like a tender….

Peach blossom flower.

Shen Zhixian pinched the half-blooming peach flower between his fingertips. There was a single dewdrop still sitting on the stamen. He lightly shook the flower and the dewdrop slid down along his white fingertips, leaving a gleaming, winding trail of water.

It was the peach blossom from last night.

Maybe, last night wasn't a dream he’d imagined after all.

Shen Zhixian’s eyebrows rose, his mood suddenly brightening. An inexplicable smile stretched across his lips. He held this peach blossom flower tenderly in the palm of his hand, as if holding a ray of warmth that belonged to Yan Jin alone.

.....

Recently, demons and devils were running rampant. As one of the most important sect in the cultivation realm, Qingyun Sect naturally must also send out people to take care of them.

Demons and devil were no small matter. As a result, many sects took this opportunity to send a lot of disciples out to gain experience. Qingyun Sect was no different, which resulted in more things that needed to be discussed. As a result, today's meeting was dissolved late.

When Shen Zhixian entered, the steward was still discussing the numbers of disciples that had been sent out. He quietly sat down in his seat under the eyes of everyone and gave a slight nod, indicating that the steward could continue.

The steward hesitated for a moment, and finally retreated under Song Ming's instructions.

Song Ming looked at Shen Zhixian's expressionless face and slowly said, "Junior Brother is finally out."

Shen Zhixian smiled, looked at him meaningfully, and didn't answer his words. He merely said, "Sect Leader Song, you can first let the steward finish his speech. Afterward, I have something to say."

Song Ming saw the smile on his face and his heart jumped. The half-devil hiding in his body felt Shen Zhixian's breath and became a little restless, but Song Ming forcibly suppressed it.

As the sect leader, he wasn't even aware of Shen Zhixian's silent return, much like how he wasn't aware when Shen Zhixian had first left.

Qingyun Sect's restrictions couldn't stop Shen Zhixian.

Song Ming gritted his teeth, his hands tightening under the cover of his sleeves as he held back his anger and hatred. Sect Leader Wen really valued

Shen Zhixian too much. If things hadn’t happened the way it did back then, Song Ming wouldn’t even be able to touch even a little bit of the sect leader’s position.

When Shen Zhixian returned with a serious heart injury and it became apparent that it would be difficult to heal, Sect Leader Wen quietly found Song Ming and proposed that he take over the sect leader position. He’d never been so happy.

But then, Sect Leader Wen’s next sentence pushed him into a cold abyss.

Sect Leader Wen told him that he would only be a temporary leader and that, when Shen Zhixian’s heart was cured, he must return the position back to Shen Zhixian.

Sing Ming’s heart was conflicted, filled with warmth and coldness, joy and hatred. These opposing emotions entangled each other, making his heart feel as if it would explode.

He pretended to calmly agree to Sect Leader Wen’s requirements, expressed his determination to care for Shen Zhixian, and finally tricked Sect Leader Wen into announcing him as the new sect leader.

In the beginning, Song Ming didn’t have many bad thoughts. He’d schemed against Shen Zhixian once and won this temporary position. He thought that if Sect Leader Wen saw how hard he’d worked and how diligent he was, he would change his mind.

But, Sect Leader Wen had set his mind on Shen Zhixian and, no matter how well Song Ming did, he wouldn’t change his mind.

Malice accumulated at the bottom of his heart. The more Song Ming watched Sect Leader Wen’s care for Shen Zhixian, which only got better day by day, the deeper his malice became.

He'd became used to the feeling of being respected by everyone. Thus, he would never allow this youth to return. Once Sect Leader Wen was dead,

Shen Zhixian's heart ailment would be near impossible to recover and he would never be able to rob Song Ming of his sect leader position.

As long as Sect Leader Wen was gone, no one would ever know that promise he'd made that year.

After the steward finished reporting the numbers, Shen Zhixian slowly said, "Master entrusted the sect to me. However, because of my heart ailment, I've long bothered Senior Brother with this heavy task. After I came out of seclusion, I realized that my heart was no longer so troublesome. It's not good to continue to allow Senior Brother to exhaust himself. In recent days, things have been very busy. I'll take over, so that Senior Brother won't have to work hard day and night until his hair turns gray."

Song Ming jumped to his feet, moving so quickly that he nearly knocked over the teacup in front of him.

Various shocked gazes swung between Song Ming and Shen Zhixian. Song Ming calmed his mind and barely managed to force out a smile. "Congratulations to Junior Brother for his good health. Junior Brother had just come out of seclusion and needs to rest for a while…"

His thoughts were in chaos. He thought he had a good understanding of Shen Zhixian's heart ailment. That year, Sect Leader Wen couldn't find a cure and thought that Shen Zhixian would become a useless person all his life. How did he suddenly--

Shen Zhixian's news made him muddleheaded. He couldn't think of a quick response and could only repeatedly say, "Junior Brother is really free. The sect currently has no major problems so Junior Brother also needn't try to show off…"

Suddenly, Shen Zhixian waved his sleeves and a cold wind ruthlessly shot forward like a blade toward Yan Jin. This unyielding show of strength only displayed a tenth of Shen Zhixian's power and position.

Song Ming's conduct was smooth and sly, but his cultivation was weak. For

many years, he'd been given such respect that he'd become complacent, causing him to neglect his cultivation. At this moment, he was only an eleventh rank cultivator, who hadn't even reached the peak of his stage yet.

Shen Zhixian was so aggressive that Song Ming felt his whole body become as cold as ice. He shrank back subconsciously and tried his best to resist. However, the wind blade stopped right in front of him, narrowly paring his eyebrows. Then, suddenly, it disappeared altogether and instead became a ghostly figure.

"It's an illusion stone!" cried an older steward. "It's Sect Leader Wen!"

Sect Leader Wen's illusion was so close that it nearly touched Song Ming as it stood face to face with him. For a moment, Song Ming thought that he was seeing a ghost and he stammered "Sect Leader Wen." A chill traveled from his scalp down to the soles of his feet and he instinctively shot out spiritual power to break this face in front of him.

But his spiritual power unexpectedly bounced off a barrier and came hurtling back toward him, catching Song Ming off guard. The spiritual power slammed hard into him, throwing him onto his back with a loud noise.

Shen Zhixian raised his hand and the illusion stone in his hand floated in the air, carrying with it the image of Sect Leader Wen.

Song Ming's entire body was trembling, his mind numbed. He didn't hear a thing that Sect Leader Wen's image was saying. Instead, he looked at it as if he was looking at an enemy, his mouth opening and closing soundlessly.

The illusion was short. In a moment, it was over, leaving only a dark illusion stone. Shen Zhixian generously asked everyone to check if this was indeed a message left by Sect Leader Wen. He tilted his head to look at Song Ming and smiled softly. He said, "All these years, you've worked hard."

The illusion stone was passed from hand to hand, leaving in its wake

various whispers.

“It is indeed a message left by Lord Wen.”

“So Sect Leader Song was only a temporary sect leader?"

“Looking at Elder Shen’s appearance, it seems that his heart ailment has gotten better. It’s time to return this position to Elder Shen …”

Sect Leader Wen’s prestige was very high. Even though he’d been gone for a long time, everyone still admired him. Thus, everyone instinctively wanted to follow his wishes.

After listening to all these murmured comments, hate flashed through Song Ming’s eyes. Deep inside, he felt an uncontrollable fear. Deeply aware that everyone was staring at him, he clenched his hands into fists. “What’s the meaning of this?”

“I’m just following Master's intention.” Shen Zhixian smiled gently.

His goal today wasn’t to completely force Song Ming from his position. Although Song Ming wasn’t very good at cultivating, he was very capable at other things. He’d been a sect leader for several years and had many deep connections.

Although Shen Zhixian was confident that a few of the elders would help him, he hadn’t yet spoken frankly to all the elders. Naturally, he wouldn’t be able to completely uproot Song Ming’s power in such a short time. The only alternative was to catch him off guard. In his haste, he might reveal his true face.

Seeing that Song Ming was flustered, Shen Zhixian no longer pressed the issue. He took a step back and lightly said, “Senior Brother have worked hard these past few years. Now that I’m healthier, it wouldn’t be good for me to allow Senior Brother to continue working alone. Senior Brother is too busy. Tomorrow, you can hand over some of the duties to me.”

He no longer called Song Ming sect leader and instead only called him “Senior Brother.” Although senior brother sounded more intimated, it undoubtedly showed his attitude.

The Qingyun Sect Leader’s position, he intended to take it back.

There was an uproar. The Third and Fourth Elders didn’t attend today’s meeting while the First and Second Elders showed no clear reaction. They simply stood on the sidelines and watched as Shen Zhixian ignored Song Ming’s face and dropped such a massive bomb.

Everyone was shocked and watched him walk away with curious and tentative eyes.

As he left, Shen Zhixian’s smile faded and his eyes grew thoughtful. Right now, the best way to deal with Song Ming was to speak to the elders as quickly as possible and win their support. This would lend him more credence and allow him to force Song Ming to reveal his true nature.

First Elder and Second Elder’s attitudes were still unknown. The most certainty lay with Fourth Elder, who’d treated him alongside Sect Leader Wen. He should have the best understanding of Shen Zhixian’s situation at the time and would easily believe him. Unfortunately, Fourth Elder was currently not on sect grounds at this moment.

Shen Zhixian returned to Fifth Peak, issued several commands in succession, and began to deal with various things in an orderly manner. In fact, after "transmigrating," Shen Zhixian consciously understood the various situations in the sect, but because he'd always thought that he was an outsider shouldn't get involved in the sect’s internal affairs, he’d maintained his distance.

Now, things were different. To deal with Song Ming, he must quickly settle various matters within the sect.

He was so busy that the day passed in a flash.

He didn't call for dinner, and no disciple dared to come up and bother him. When he set down the last book, it was already dark outside.

Shen Zhixian pushed open the door, and the moonlight lazily burst in. He looked around outside but didn’t see the figure he hoped for.

Thinking of last night’s “dream,” Shen Zhixian walked to the jade couch, hesitated briefly, and lay down.

But, his mind was too occupied with thoughts of Yan Jin, making him unable to fall asleep. After twisting and turning for a long time, he finally became a little tired.

In the dim lights, someone seemed to be holding his hand.

It was a very familiar warmth.

Shen Zhixian relaxed and closed his eyes, trying to call “A’jin” but found that his throat wouldn’t move and no sound could escape.

Filled with a bad premonition, he tried to open his eyes but his eyes were so heavy that, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't pry them open.

The person pulled him up with both hands and held him in his arms, every movement full of gentleness and care.

Shen Zhixian saw only darkness, but he felt the person brush a loose strand of his hair back. Then, the person whispered by his ear, “Sui Xian…”

This person sounded like Yan Jin.

But, he seemed a bit different.

Shen Zhixian’s heart moved slightly, and he continued the battle to force his eyes open. He heard Yan Jin softly whisper, “...Wake up, okay?”

I’m trying… Shen Zhixian silently cried to Yan Jin, wanting to sooth the

despair and remorse that laced under Yan Jin’s every word.

This despair and remorse was suppressed so tightly and deeply, like a needle hidden within a large mass of cotton. It could not be seen from a distance but could only be heard with careful attention.

Shen Zhixian thought this. Initially, he didn’t react much when he heard Yan Jin’s words. But, gradually, he began to sense that something was wrong.

What happened to Yan Jin? Why did this mood faintly show signs of collapse?

Last night, he was obviously fine ... What had happened?

Shen Zhixian was puzzled, but his limbs didn't seem to belong to him. No matter how hard he tried to move, he could only feel Yan Jin firmly clasped his waist with one hand, allowing him to lean on his warm chest. With his other hand, Yan Jin began to untie Shen Zhixian's belt and, with a slight pull, he pulled open his collar.

Yan Jin no longer spoke and continued to silently remove Shen Zhixian’s clothes.

Warm fingertips brushed against slightly cool skin. Every touch evoked a burning sensation that rapidly spread throughout Shen Zhixian's body. He didn’t know where he drew the strength from, but he suddenly opened his eyes—Finally, his eyes were open!

His vision blurred for a moment but quickly focused on a familiar hand, which was casually throwing his shirt aside.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 67

The surrounding was a bit dim. Fatigue seemed to seep from deep within Shen Zhixian’s bones, leeching away all his energy. As soon as he opened his eyes, his eyelids kept wanting to drift close.

He looked around with painstaking attention, only to find that he was no longer in Fifth Peak and was instead in a strangely familiar room.

It was familiar because the room was arranged according to his preference, but it was also strange because he was certain that he’d never been to this room before.

Suddenly, a warm, wet touch came from his chest. Shen Zhixian was startled. He looked down, only to find Yan Jin holding him with one hand while gently and carefully cleaning his body with a towel.

His upper body was completely bare, making him feel very insecure. Every inch of skin was trembling. Shen Zhixian took a deep breath and wondered: What was Yan Jin doing? What kind of stimulation was this?

He wanted to ask, but hard as he tried, he only managed to make a weak sound. Yan Jin couldn’t hear him.

Shen Zhixian helplessly withstood the sensation of Yan Jin's gaze as it swept across his upper body, leaving behind a scorching hot trail and making him want to curl his toes in shame.

He had no strength to resist at all. At this moment, he seemed like a wandering soul attached to this body, unable to move and unable to make

Yan Jin acknowledge him. He could only passively allow Yan Jin to wipe his body down.

Repeatedly, wiped back and forth three times.

The water had an unknown mixture that emitted the faint scent of medicine. Shen Zhixian felt as if he'd become a cooked shrimp, peeled and sliding across Yan Jin's hand. It made him want to curl back inward.

After wiping Shen Zhixian's upper body, Yan Jin tossed the towel aside and began to repeatedly press and rub on several large acupoints on his body. Then, Yan Jin carefully channeled spiritual power into him, gently soothing and moistening his veins.

Shen Zhixian was kneaded comfortably by him, causing the fatigue in his bones to be slightly relieved by two points. Still, he could only squint helplessly at him.

Even as he was resisting his drowsiness, someone hesitantly said from outside the door, "Venerable Lord, there is someone…"

Shen Zhixian was shocked and tried to focus on the rest of the person's sentence. But, before this sentence could be completed, Yan Jin interrupted, "I'm not meeting anyone."

The person outside immediately murmured in acknowledgement. Shen Zhixian was a little curious. He looked up at Yan Jin, but Yan Jin didn't seem to notice his gaze. Instead, Yan Jin placed a warm and slightly moist kiss on the corners of his eyes and lips. "Sui Xian, wake up soon and look at me, okay?"

His tone was too low, as if he was quietly begging. Shen Zhixian didn't know what to do. His heart ached. He wanted to reach out and hug Yan Jin, but he couldn't move. He could only hold Yan Jin in his heart. All the while, he couldn't help but think that this dream was a little strange. When he returns from the dream and sees the real person, he must give Yan Jin a good hug.

Yan Jin embraced him and then continued to rub him for a while. He put Shen Zhixian’s shirt loosely back on him and eased him on to the bed. Then, he turned away, soaked the towel into the mixture, and walked back.

This time, Yan Jin extended his hand toward Shen Zhixian’s pants.

This movement was too ambiguous. By the time the ties on Shen Zhixian’s trousers were undone, he felt as if he was going to lose his head. He suddenly broke through the invisible restraint and grabbed Yan Jin’s hand. “Don’t—!”

“Don’t what?”

Yan Jin’s puzzled voice sounded in his ears. Shen Zhixian didn’t think and subconsciously finished the rest of his sentence. “Take off my pants…”

Before he finished speaking, he suddenly returned to his senses. His eyes flickered, and though the dimness remained, he realized that he’d returned to Fifth Peak. The hazy moonlight illuminated the person in front of him, making Shen Zhixian speechless. After a moment, he gently coughed and sat up straight.

However, Xiao Caoya suddenly emerged from Yan Jin's shoulder and jumped happily on to Shen Zhixian’s shoulder. One wondered what mysterious, heavy thing it ate. As it landed on an unprepared Shen Zhixian’s shoulder, the force of it made him fall back on the bed.

Shen Zhixian was holding on to Yan Jin’s hand so, as he fell back, he also ended up pulling Yan Jin along. For his part, Yan Jin could have maintained his position, but unexpectedly, he also fell down with Shen Zhixian. He landed halfway on Shen Zhixian’s body with his elbow resting by Shen Zhixian’s cheeks.

Shen Zhixian, “.....”

Xiao Caoya didn’t know what it did and focused on jumping on their

shoulders. After a while, it realized that they weren’t paying any attention at all and it jumped angrily away. Pouting, it rushed inside Shen Zhixian’s house, leaving the two people facing each other outside.

“Um… Let’s sit up first and talk?”

Yan Jin thoughtfully said, “Who wanted to take off your pants?"

There were billowing waves in his eyes, and the gleam of lights within those depths were faintly cold.

Shen Zhixian didn’t want to talk about it and changed the topic, “A’jin, are you in my dream or is this real?”

Yan Jin didn't answer, but his dark eyes clung to him.

Shen Zhixian couldn't stand his eyes. He sighed helplessly and said, “I just had a dream, probably a dream…”

Shen Zhixian described the dream and, as he talked, he suddenly noticed that Yan Jin’s expression had frozen. An odd thought flashed across his mind and he frowned. “A’jin, tell me honestly. What’s going on here? Was that really a dream?”

Last night, he was in a bad mood. He’d clung to Yan Jin and hadn’t thought so much about anything else. Today, he was much calmer and could think more about other things.

He was now certain that he hadn’t transmigrated into a book. He was actually the original Shen Zhixian in this world. After his body was seized, he’d somehow ended up in the so-called modern world...But there was still something missing.

And his rebirth...

He looked up at Yan Jin and said firmly, “A’jin, you have memories of the last life, haven’t you?"

Yan Jin's lips trembled, and he seemed to have difficulty opening his mouth.

Shen Zhixian felt as if he was on the verge of discovering the truth. Anxious, he pushed Yan Jin aside and pressed him underneath, quickly asking, “We knew each other a long time ago. It was only later that my body was seized ... You knew my body was seized, didn’t you?”

“The last life—let’s call it the last life, what did you do after I died to make time go back?”

“Where are you now? Is this a dream or is this real?”

Yan Jin's expressions became heavier and heavier. His red eyes displayed regret and pain. His throat moved and he said hoarsely, “Sui Xian… I…”

Every word he’d managed to force out seemed to be full of pain. He said, “I’m sorry…”

Shen Zhixian let out a breath, lowered his head and pressed his forehead intimately against Yan’ Jin’s. Their breathing became intertwined and, when he spoke softly, his lips were a mere breath away from grazing against Yan Jin’s lips.

“I don’t blame you, A’jin. I really don’t blame you… I just want to know what’s going on. Can you tell me?”

His voice was very gentle, just like the tone he’d used on Little Yan Jin many years ago when he couldn’t sleep. In his eyes, there was only gentleness and forgiveness.

Yan Jin blinked slowly and finally seemed to make a decision. His voice was hoarse as he said, “In the last life... After I..."

Xixi: Once again, this chapter is only 3 pages long so I went ahead and finished the next half chapter as well. Enjoy!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 68

Yan Jin was an extremely tough person.

When he was a child, no matter the number of times and ways he'd been bullied, no matter how alone or frightened he'd felt when he woke up and found himself face to face with countless demons and monsters, he never once collapsed.

But, everything fell apart when Song Ming laid at his feet in a pool of blood and told him the truth.

At that time, Qingyun Sect had already been squandered by Song Ming into an empty shell, allowing Yan Jin to destroy the entire sect with barely any efforts. In the end, the last one dying and struggling at his feet was Song Ming.

Song Ming felt Yan Jin's killing intent, and he couldn't help but shiver. Blood oozed out of his wounds. He looked both pitiful and ridiculous in his helplessness and in his inability to escape.Therefore, he could only cower vulnerably in front of Yan Jin.

But, he was not reconciled.

He looked at Yan Jin. Fear, pain, hatred, and unwillingness intermixed inside him, making his expression look extremely malevolent. He smiled strangely, but this smile revealed a hint of taunting. He let out a bloody cough, which splatter to the ground as he rasped, "Yan Jin, do you remember who you killed?"

Yan Jin didn't answer. He gazed intently at Song Yan, his eyes full of condescension, as if he was looking at a worthless ant. Aside from that, there were no emotions at all in those red eyes.

After becoming a devil cultivator, Yan Jin’s hands were stained with too much blood. There were demons and devils and fiends. And there were immortal cultivators. He’d killed countless things. If there’s anyone he ought to remember, it should be…

His master.

The one who’d directly caused him to be this way.

The master who’d severed his spirit root and ruined all his hopes.

—No, that person was not worthy of being his master! His master shouldn’t be like this!

Yan Jin's eyes deepened. When he was brought back by Song Ming from the edge of the wasteland, Yan Jin was infected by too much devil qi. For a long time, his memories were chaotic and full of holes. It wasn’t until later, when he became a devil cultivator, that he gradually recovered his memory and remembered that person who’d embraced and protected him.

Sui Xian.

Where did he go? Why did he disappear?

Yan Jin had searched for so long in so many places and asked so many people, but he still couldn’t find him anywhere. Where did he go?

The last time he saw Sui Xian was in the wasteland so, if he lived in the wasteland, maybe one day he’ll be able to see Sui Xian again.

“I’m afraid you don’t know that Shen Zhixian once put on a disguise and went out to gain practical experience. When he came back, his life was gone—Oh, it can’t be counted as being dead. After all, a half-devil only

seized his body. At any rate, it allowed him to live a few more years."

"There was some news that you've been looking for someone in recent years. You didn't realize the connection between Sui Xian and Shen Zhixian. Hahaha—"

A sword ray flashed. Song Ming issued a sharp scream. He covered his shoulder that was dripping blood with one hand and rolled on the ground in pain. His severed arm landed nearby and was eaten by a cloud of black qi until only the bones remained.

Yan Jin's eyes nearly dripped with blood. He held his sword so tightly that his hand was shaking. A cold, killing intent rose from within him, nearly breaking Song Ming into icy shards. "What did you say?"

"Hahahaha…" Song Ming's wounds continued to bleed unceasingly. He knew he was going to die anyway and no longer cared. He merely held his wounds and laughed delightedly at his revenge. "Yan Jin, you've become a devil. You're so powerful. But you didn't know that when you killed Shen Zhixian, you killed Sui Xian. Hahahaha—"

The malicious laughter came to an abrupt halt. Song Ming didn't even see Yan Jin's sword coming. He just felt that his entire body had become light and tetherless, as if he was suddenly floating on a cloud in the sky. A gust of wind blew and his consciousness scattered like dust.

Yan Jin had the lives of countless masters and cultivators on his hands. Song Ming's final end was nothing more than another death.

But, his words seemed to hide a point of truth and it pierced a small hole in Yan Jin's walls.

"You're going to kill me? You'll regret it…"

"You're killing him… You're going to kill him…"

Shen Zhixian's words before his death suddenly intruded into Yan Jin's

mind. His pupils suddenly dilated. His entire body felt as if it'd fallen in an icy hell, and every breath became saturated with pain and despair.

Yan Jin went mad.

Qingyun Sect was already in ruins. In that desolate place, Yan Jin continued to dig through the soil with his bare hands, desperate to uncover the place that was originally the Forbidden Room. He didn't even look at the sword next to him and continued to scrape away the gravel and mud with shaking, bleeding hands. He dug under the broken stone and, with great efforts, finally found a piece of clothing.

The clothing was torn and soaked in blood. Because the blood had been there for a long time, the whole piece of clothing was dry and hard, so brittle that it seemed as if just a little bit of force would crumble it into ashes.

Yan Jin knelt within the ruins and held the piece of clothing that still faintly carried Shen Zhixian's breath. In a daze, he looked at it for a long time. Sweetness rushed up his throat and he vomited a mouthful of blood, which ended up spraying on to the cloth.

It was unknown how that fragile piece of clothing could withstand a mouthful of blood from the devil lord. But as Yan Jin's blood silently soaked into the cloth, a few drops of blood slid between his fingers, as if not wanting to leave behind a single remaining breath for him.

….

The devil Yan Jin, who came from the wasteland, was madly raging at the entire cultivation world. He seemed to have completely lost his mind. Regardless of whether it was demons, fiends, or immortal cultivators from various sects, as long as they had the misfortune to appear in front of Yan Jin, they would all become ghosts under his sword.

For a while, the cultivation world was chaotic. While cultivators struggled to kill various demons that had escaped from the wasteland, they also had to

be vigilant in case Yan Jin would suddenly appear and make their lives even more miserable.

The cultivation realm finally ushered in a second calamity. The first calamity was the riots of countless demons and fiends thousands of years ago. At that time, there were several powerful cultivators who drove the demons into the wasteland. However, the current cultivation realm was stable for far too long and there was no one powerful enough to suppress Yan Jin.

This situation lasted for nearly a year, dragging the entire cultivation realm to the brink of extinction.

Until, with painstaking efforts, Yan Jin finally found the Undead City.

It was rumored that there was a Soul Tracing Grass in the Undead City. This grass could turn back time and cultivate the soul.

This was Yan Jin's last hope.

This wretched man was very carefully nurturing a lamp that burned all day and all night. The lamp had no candle; there was only a broken bone wrapped in a ray of light. That light displayed a faint image.

It was just that the image was very weak and fragile, as if it would dissipate with the wind at any moment.

“Sui Xian, don’t be afraid. I’ve finally found it… I will bring you back,” the man murmured, his voice thick with desperation.

The Undead City’s original’s intent was to bolster the wasteland’s restriction seal. After the restriction seal had shattered, this mysterious Undead City was also quietly hidden away by its owner. Therefore, it was extremely difficult for Yan Jin to find it.

The Soul Tracing Grass was crucial to the existence of the Undead City. But, Si Fei’s thoughts were unknown. Instead of fighting, he simply

surrendered the Soul Tracing Grass.

After Yan Jin left, a cluster of Wanggui flowers blossomed around Si Fei. He covered his mouth and coughed a few times, until blood stained his hand.

He carelessly wiped the blood stain with a handkerchief and tossed it into the air, where it ignited in fire and burned down into ashes before dispersing in the wind.

The bald monk moved away from the shadows and looked anxiously at Si Fei. “Without the Soul Tracing Grass, how can you still suppress the Wanggui flowers?”

“Without Soul Tracing Grass, I wouldn’t be able to control it for long. It will probably weaken.” Si Fei added, “Did you hear what he just said?”

The bald monk was silent. The scene from earlier flashed before his eyes.

“Merely one person had died. Are you going to bury the whole world with him?” The youth in dark red stood within the field of flowers and asked calmly.

Yin Jin was more calm than the youth, but his calmness had a ruthless undertone. “Why not?”

The killing intent that exuded from Yan Jin’s body was terrifying. The bald monk shivered. “Calm down, calm down…”

He was silent for a long moment, then suddenly sighed. There was a trace of melancholic regret in his narrow eyes. "I have divined three big hexagrams in my life."

The first hexagram was Yan Jin’s.

When the bald monk first met Yan Jin, he was only a newborn child. At that time, the bald monk was also younger and more impetuous and didn’t

understand restraint. He happened to be passing by when he saw Little Yan Jin’s face. He even thought of a divination and left behind the words of "Calamitous Star.”

This hexagram ruined a newborn innocent child’s life.

The second hexagram was calculated for Sect Leader Wen.

He’d met Sect Leader Wen while out practicing, and they soon became close friends. When he came out, he calculated a hexagram for Sect Leader Wen, and the result was startling—It was a hexagram showing death.

He failed to conceal this hexagram from Sect Leader Wen, resulting in Sect Leader Wen being unable to escape the fate shown in the hexagram. In the dark quiet of night, the bald monk sometimes couldn’t help but think that if he didn’t calculate this hexagram, perhaps Sect Leader Wen would not deliver the position of sect leader to his disciple so frankly and ignore himself. He wouldn’t have fulfilled his fate and died such a terrible death.

This hexagram killed his only best friend.

"The third hexagram ..." The bald monk sighed heavily. "Should never be wrong. When Yan Jin became a devil, I calculated another hexagram for him."

When the third hexagram was calculated, he cast Yan Jin into trouble. This life that will endanger the world needed to be extinguished. His original intention was to let cultivators join forces to suppress Yan Jin and the wasteland demons. But who would ever thought that the natural born devil would be so powerful? Countless cultivators were killed by Yan Jin with no restraint.

With this hexagram, he destroyed the entire cultivation realm.

—No, maybe there was a way.

The bald monk took a deep breath and brought out from his sleeves the idle

birth weapon that had laid unused for a long time. A stack of thick destiny paper.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 68 part2

Everyone in the cultivation realm found that the terrifying devil had suddenly disappeared.

No one knew where he went, and no one knew whether he was alive or dead. As they rebuilt their ancestral gates, they looked at each other—was the big devil dead?

No, he wasn’t.

It's just that the person who can suppress the big devil finally “lived.”

The present Sui Xian couldn’t be considered to have been resurrected. Under the effect of Soul Tracing Grass, he’d just barely managed to consolidate some of his scattered soul.

His bones could not be found for the longest time. When Yan Jin briefly left after killing Shen Zixian, Song Ming quietly returned and set the whole room ablaze.

Yan Jin spent endless hours turning over the ruins of Qingyun Sect and found only a piece of bone the size of a finger.

His hands shook as he pulled the broken bone like a treasure to his heart, feeling the familiar breath that was so faint it was barely distinguishable. His heart brimmed with agony.

Later, Yan Jin spent countless thoughts and efforts and immeasurable hours, before exhausting his spiritual power to shape a body for Sui Xian.

Yan Jin wrapped the broken bone with the best spiritual jade, tied it with a red string, and hung it around Sui Xian's neck. It could be regarded as helping the spirit claim the body.

Because Sui Xian's soul was incomplete, when he woke up, he was completely ignorant with no memories of his past life. He was like a newborn baby, his eyes clear and bright and full of wonder.

When he opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was Yan Jin. Yan Jin's gaze was very warm and held no malice at all. Sui Xian merely looked at him and blinked.

Then, he watched as the man's eyes suddenly became red-rimmed and hot tears slipped down his cheeks, dripping on to the back of his hand. Sui Xian shrank slightly, out of instinct, and let out a small sound.

The sound seemed to have awakened Yan Jin. He held up Sui Xian's weak hand and placed a hot kiss on the back of that fair hand. He called, "Sui Xian."

"I finally found you."

Due to Sui Xian's physical limitations, Yan Jin didn't take him back to the wasteland. The environment there was too bad and was therefore unsuitable for Sui Xian to live in. Instead, he found a place with beautiful mountains and rivers, built a house by himself, and lived with Sui Xian.

For a long time after waking up, Sui Xian was very weak and was often lethargic. The fatigue made him unable to stay awake for long periods of time.

Yan Jin found in various places spiritual medicinal herbs that were beneficial to the soul. He turned them into pellets or ground them into spiritual elixirs and fed them to Sui Xian every day. He also religiously wiped Sui Xian's body with medicine. His efforts helped Sui Xian's soul become more solid bit by bit.

He wanted to use Soul Tracing Grass, but Soul Tracing Grass was still immature and its effect would be minimal. Yan Jin could only continue to support it.

Soul Tracing Grass was a god grass left over from ancient times. These god grasses were incredibly difficult to raise. When Si Fei handed the grass over to Yan Jin, he explained that Soul Tracing Grass needed to be nourished with the heart's blood. Therefore, whoever wanted to use it must nourish it with his or her own heart’s blood. If another person’s blood was used, the amount must be double.

However, Sui Xian was just a fractured soul. Where would Yan Jin get his heart’s blood? Even if it was possible, Yan Jin wasn’t willing to let Sui Xian suffer. So, he quietly raised the grass himself.

It took a long time for Sui Xian to become better. Gradually, he began to wake for longer periods of time. At the beginning, he couldn't move by himself and was carried around by Yan Jin. Later, he became strong enough to walk with Yan Jin’s support.

Maybe it was because the first person he saw when he woke up was Yan Jin. Or maybe, it was a subconscious knot left in the soul.

But, it evoked in Sui Xian a dependence that made him want to stick to Yan Jin all the time. Sometimes, he would sit in a daze for a long time. Then, he would suddenly lift his head to look at Yan Jin and, seeing that he was still there, his lips would curve into a contented smile. He would nestle in Yan Jin’s arms and continue his daze.

Yan Jin embraced him like he was holding the rarest treasure.

There were still demons and fiends in the wasteland. It wasn't that they stayed there voluntarily, but rather, the reason was that they were afraid of Yan Jin. These demons and fiends had been suppressed in the wasteland for thousands of years and longed to leave. Yan Jin not only conquered them violently, but his strengths made them willingly bow down to him, willing

to accept him as their Supreme Lord.

A few little demons who didn't look fierce nor malevolent were chosen to stay near Yan Jin's residence for him to command.

The little demons would diligently plant flowers and dig ponds to raise fishes, eager to make the surrounding environment more interesting so that Sui Xian would smile.

Here, Sui Xian's smiles were a good thing!

Although they didn't know what was going on between the Supreme Lord and the white-clad man called Sui Xian, they could see that the Supreme Lord greatly respected Sui Xian and cherished him more than his own life. He would hold him in his hand as afraid of him falling and hold him in his mouth as if afraid of him melting.

As long as Sui Xian smiled, the Supreme Lord's mood would become very good, which was a great thing for the little demons. God knows, they shiver everyday living under Yan Jin's might.

They were anxious to make Sui Xian smile everyday. It's best to smile so that the Supreme Lord would forget to trouble them. What did those human words say in the book?

"After suffering through a spring night that was all too short, the Emperor did not attend the morning court."

They didn't understand what morning court was, but the first sentence was understandable enough After all, they may look small, but they were also a-thousand-year-old demons. They ought to understand these matters. They didn't expect the Supreme Lord to hold an early morning court; they merely hoped that he wouldn't look for them nor find trouble with them.

So, a few fluffy demons jumped up and down everyday, just to make Sui Xian smile and laugh and make this peaceful day a little more fun.

The sun rose and fell, rose and fell. Spring turned into Summer, Summer to Autumn, Autumn to Winter, and so on. Just like that, a long time passed.

In recent years, Yan Jin had been carefully taking care of Sui Xian. Everyday, Sui Xian would be fed a spirit elixir and was becoming better.

Yan Jin was energized. Sometimes, he went out to find more elixirs, but he didn't dare leave for too long. Generally, he left by sunrise and returned by sunset. Seeing that Sui Xian felt insecure at night, he didn't leave one step at all the moment night fell.

Early in the morning, Yan Jin woke Sui Xian, helped him up, and said, "Today, a spiritual fruit would ripen. I'll go pick it later and bring it back. There should be several companion beasts that needed to be dealt with so I might come back a little later."

Every high-grade spirit fruit would have a companion beast next to it. The higher the quality, the more powerful the companion beast. Sometimes, there would be even more than one companion beasts.

When Sui Xian heard the words 'companion beast,' he frowned and hugged Yan Jin unhappily. He whispered, "I'm fine. Can't I pick it?"

Strong as Yan Jin was, sometimes when faced with a large horde of companion beasts, he would inevitably become slightly injured. Although the injuries weren't serious, Sui Xian would feel distressed whenever he saw it.

Maybe, it was an instinct from deep within his soul.

Yan Jin stood up and helped him dress. He gently wiped away the little bit of tears that were squeezed out of Sui Xian's eyes when he yawned and softly said, "I'll be back soon. I won't be injured. I'll see you in a while, okay?"

Sui Xian sent him away unhappily, lazily kicked off his shoes, and walked around the room barefoot. Finally, he settled in the soft couch by the

window and leaned back against the frame.

The window was only half open, allowing the breeze to slowly drift in. Sui Xian yawned lazily. With Yan Jin gone, he felt so lazy that he couldn’t even muster up the energy to push the window open wider. He looked out through the narrow gap and saw a few birds on the branches outside.

After looking for a while, Sui Xian became drowsy again. His eyes drifted shut and he was prepared to take a nap when he heard a quiet murmur outside the window.

It was Yan Jin’s two little demons, a lop-eared rabbit and a big-tailed squirrel.

Yan Jin’s identity and external affairs were known to Sui Xian. Yan Jin didn’t hide anything from him, but he didn’t care much either. For him, Yan Jin treated him very well and that was enough.

These two little demons are the most lonely and liked to talk a lot. They thought that Sui Xian was sleeping in the room, and they didn’t think too much. They got together in the cool shade and gossiped under the eaves.

The rabbit said, “Sister Peacock said that the number of times he has returned to the wasteland is getting less and less. She just sent a message saying that a lot of things have accumulated in the wasteland.”

Squirrel said, “Oh, there is no other way. Right now, Supreme Lord is obsessed with a beautiful person. It is normal to ignore the wasteland.”

Rabbit said, “Also, Supreme Lord was single for many years, and he's been like this for a long time. Well, let's not talk about it anymore. Is the latest book about the fox demon out yet?”

The squirrel hugged his big tail, dug through the fluff, and pulled out a picture book. “It’s out. I just bought it from another demon!”

This was said to be a story adapted from a fox demon and was based on

personal experience. However, because the fox demon couldn’t write, it could only draw the story.

The rabbit turned the pages with two long ears and happily said, “Where did we last stop? Oh, it was when the fox demon met the emperor in the human world, and that emperor was immediately seduced by it…”

The two demons gathered together. While looking at the pictures, they whispered to each other, engaging in quite a lively discussion. There were even a few jokes, such as “The Supreme Lord is like this emperor,” and “Sui Xian is like the fox demon.”

This was a story about how a beautiful fox demon seduced an emperor into losing his throne. After listening for a while, Sui Xian thought it was quite interesting. He felt a rare interest, opened the window wider, and called to the two fluffies, “What are you looking at? I want to see too.”

So, when Yan Jin returned in the evening, he saw the rabbit and squirrel standing uneasily by the door. The moment they saw him, they stopped whispering.

He furrowed his brows, emitting a heavy sense of oppressive power. “What’s going on?”

The squirrel held its big tail and forced itself to be courageous. “Young, young, young, young master wanted to take a look, look, look at the illustrations…”

They didn’t dare address Sui Xian by name. Since they didn’t know what to call him, they modeled after the humans and called him young master.

Yan Jin saw that the squirrel had almost plucked his tail bald and didn’t say anymore. He pushed inside.

Sui Xian was relaxing on the soft couch. His clothes were slightly messy, and his slender fingers just happened to turn over a page. He was so fascinated with what he was looking at that he didn’t even notice Yan Jin’s

return.

Demons were always more open and bold. This picture book told such a story and so the images were unavoidably...very stimulating.

He didn’t understand these things very well. But, it was probably natural instinct because, as he looked at it, he felt that the room was a little hot. He loosened his collar to cool down and continued to look with interest at the pictures.

“Sui Xian?” Yan Jin laid the jade box that contained the spirit fruit on the table and walked over doubtfully.

When Sui Xian heard his voice, he regained his senses. He took Yan Jin’s hand and gently pulled Yan Jin to sit on the soft couch. Then, he nestled himself in Yan Jin’s arms and shoved the opened picture book into his hands. He pointed to the image, saying “What are they doing?”

Yan Jin subconsciously glanced down, then sucked in a breath.

It was a charming fox demon with clothing all eschewed, lewdly exhausting itself on an emperor.

Xixi: I'm so productive. I also have an extra post today. Hehe. *Pats self on back

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 69

Because Sui Xian’s soul was too weak, he rarely went outside. Therefore, he didn’t know much about these kinds of things and only relied on his own instinct to understand. Yan Jin had been out in the world for a long time and naturally understood but…

He still looked at Sui Xian with great respect.

He didn’t dare have any illusions or blasphemous thoughts.

He closed the picture book and tossed it aside. Noticing that Sui Xian’s shoes were kicked off some distance away, he picked up the person and placed him back on the bed.

Noting that Yan Jin refused to answer, Sui Xian merely hooked his arms around Yan Jin’s neck and sat down obediently on the bed. However, when he let go, he saw that Yan Jin was turning around to fetch the spirit fruit.

The spirit fruit was placed in a translucent jade box. It was bright in color and looked very good. However, based on the experience of eating countless spirit fruits for many years, he felt that since this fruit looked very beautiful, it must taste very bad.

He reached out, grabbed Yan Jin’s hand, and pulled him back slightly.

Yan Jin had no defense against him, nor did he resist him. He sat down on the bed, following his will. “What’s wrong?”

Instead of speaking, Sui Xian pushed him down on the bed, rose up and

leaned over him. One leg was pressed to Yan Jin's side while one hand was propped up beside Yan Jin's head. With the other hand, he flexed his fingers and pinched Yan Jin's chin, slightly raising it.

Then, he didn't hesitate to completely sell out the two fluffies. "The rabbit and squirrel said that I am the fox demon who seduces and you are the emperor who indulges. Is this right?"

He looked at Yan Jin with a smile, his loose collar slightly spread out, exposing delicate collarbones. His long hair that gleamed like waterfall was originally tied with a ribbon but, as he was lazing on the soft couch earlier, it had fallen loose. At this moment, that long hair slipped from his thin shoulders and draped over one side of his face, the silky strands brushing softly against Yan Jin's cheek.

Yan Jin felt his heart stopped.

He turned his head, trying to move his eyes away from that fair neck, but Sui Xian pinched his chin and won't allow him to move. He had no choice but to close his eyes. In a tight voice, he said, "We're not like them."

He was no longer the ignorant child of that year. Time had pulled him into a powerful man. His original, youthful admiration had silently transformed after countless days and nights of embraces.

To him, Sui Xian had always been high above him, like a celestial fairy. As a result, he could only painfully suppress his emotions and dared not show the slightest hint of blaspheming and disrespecting his beloved.

When Sui Xian heard the words "not like them," he frowned slightly and pondered for a moment.

Then, he imitated a certain illustration in the book and leaned down to bite Yan Jin's lips.

He didn't bite very hard and just nibbled a little. It didn't hurt at all; rather a hot and tingling numbness instantly swept through Yan Jin's body.

As soon as their lips touched, Sui Xian pulled back slightly and asked with a tilt of his head, “Now, are we like that?”

In an instant, a great storm gathered in Yan Jin’s dark red eyes. He looked closely at Sui Xian, who seemed to be drawing the storm around himself. Yan Jin's breathing became rushed and he suddenly reached out and clasped Sui Xian's soft and thin waist. He flipped him over, reversing their positions so that Sui Xian was on his back and Jan Yin on was top

Despite being so suddenly flipped on to his back, Sui Xian merely hooked his arms around Yan Jin’s neck. In the next moment, a soft and warm mouth covered his own, causing their hot breath to become entangled. He opened his eyes slightly, felt that this was very novel, and allowed instinct to guide him as he responded back.

When Yan Jin realized that Sui Xian was responding to him, he immediately returned to his senses, stiffened, and jerked his eyes away. He scrambled up, muttered "sorry" in a panic, then turned around and strode out the door!

This was the first time Sui Xian had seen Yan Jin act so hastily. After Yan Jin disappeared, he licked his lips and suddenly felt that things had gotten very interesting.

Sui Xian seized the two fluffies’ picture books. The two fluffies didn’t dare get angry and handed the books over in grievance. Then, they turned around and hugged in the corner. But, when Yan Jin looked over, they straightened their heads and pretended not to be brokenhearted. After all, Sui Xian contributed greatly to the Supreme Lord’s gloriously calm appearance.

The two fluffies were cowardly. But, Yan Jin was also terrified. He didn’t dare stop Sui Xian and could only look at him, his expression complicated.

Sure enough, the picture books opened the door to a whole new world for Sui Xian. Although Sui Xian had no memory or practical experience, his lack of fear in trying out new things still persisted. Since there was no one

here, if Sui Xian saw anything interesting, he would catch Yan Jin to become his experimental test subject.

For a while, Yan Jin lived in deep water, a state that was both sweet and torturous.

Occasionally, he would be unable to hold back those secret thoughts in his heart. But, as soon as he looked up and saw Sui Xian's face, he would immediately gave in to his doubts.

Must not.

This was Sui Xian. How could he disrespect him?

Even as he was hesitating and internally struggling, Sui Xian did not hesitate and acted as he wished. He was very free and unrestrained, carrying with him a look of youth.

Yan Jin felt that he was going crazy.

Until, one night, he tipped over the edge.

After Yan Jin left to find more elixirs, Sui Xian and the two fluffies pulled out the several jars of wine that had been buried in the yard and drank them.

The two fluffies consciously broke into trouble. Therefore, when they felt Yan Jin's breath nearing the vicinity, they fled away, leaving a half-drunk Sui Xian alone in the yard. In front of him were three large jars of wine, one of which was completely empty.

"This wine is delicious…" Seeing that Yan Jin had returned, Sui Xian guiltily looked at the empty wine jar. He preemptively said, "I wanted to leave you a little, but you really can't blame me. It's the wine that moved first. It poured itself into my cup. Who could stand it…"

Due to being intoxicated, Sui Xian's eyes were bright and glistening. His lips were stained wet with wine, making him look even more seductive.

When he stood, he staggered forward two steps and began to teeter.

Yan Jin couldn’t hold himself back. He strode forward and caught him.

Sui Xian took advantage of this. He immediately wrapped his arms around Yan Jin’s waist and buried his face in Yan Jin’s chest. He knew he’d drank too much, and fearing that Yan Jin would blame him, he tactfully changed the subject. “I’m drunk. I’m so sleepy. I want to sleep…”

Previously, he didn’t really feel drunk. But, when he got up and felt the cool breeze, he suddenly felt intoxicated. The sensation made him feel hot all over and turned his mind hazy. He held Yan Jin tightly, refusing to let go. “Carry me in.”

What happened later was probably a matter of course, precisely because when conditions were right, the passion between lovers would flame. Being so near to this kind of Sui Xian, how could Yan Jin continue to resist?

One person unknowingly tempting.

The other person hiding a long suppressed desire.

Once this desire surged, it was uncontrollable. Sui Xian had no protection against him. But, no matter what Yan Jin wanted to do, he willingly accepted it. He held on to Yan Jin in a muddled state, emitting soft noises.

Yan Jin's eyes glowed with madness. He struggled to maintain a trace of sobriety, refraining from being too impulsive and hurting the person in his arms. But, no matter how hard he tried, he’d lost all reasons.

Sui Xian felt as comfortable and soft as a white cat. He was rubbed and fondled and touched by Yan Jin, leaving intoxicatingly red marks on his fair skin. Eyes half-closed, he wrapped his arms around Yan Jin’s neck, feeling a sharp mixture of erraticness and satisfaction, making him feel as if he could only rely on the person above him.

In the midst of passion, he gained a moment of clarity. Raising his head

slightly, he breathed into Yan Jin’s ears, his trembling voice full of extreme joy. “A’jin, I really like you…”

Yan Jin’s last shred of resistance completely crumbled. He held Sui Xian and laid down his arms in surrender.

.....

There was a sound of water breaking.

Shen Zhixian forcibly extracted himself from the memory illusion, his face red. He didn’t know when Yan Jin had embraced him but their two bodies were cuddling on the soft bed in a particularly intimate posture.

Shen Zhixian smacked Yan Jin’s forehead in anger and felt his own forehead smart from the collision. “You have bad intentions.”

Yan Jin let out a sound of agreement, not refuting at all.

He couldn’t refuse Shen Zhixian’s request, but he also knew that Shen Zhixian was thin-skinned. Seeing these memories, he wouldn’t be able to resist breaking out of the illusion.

Shen Zhixian was very good in front of him now, quick-witted and full of vitality. He didn’t want Shen Zhixian to know about the later difficulties.

Sui Xian was so good. He shouldn’t have suffered so much.

However, Shen Zhixian didn’t allow Yan Jin to change the subject, nor he did re-enter Yan Jin's memory illusion. He slightly tilted his head and guessed, “Later, I couldn’t maintain it, right?”

In the end, there was no skeletal support. A body fabricated by spiritual power alone wouldn’t last for very long. His soul couldn’t be maintained. But, Yan Jin thought of another way to regenerate him.

Yan Jin whispered, “Soul Tracing Grass matured. In addition to its ability to

strengthen the soul, it could also turn back time…”

He, Si Fei, the bald monk--these three people staked their lives, staked the entire world, and managed to reverse the gear of time. They turned back time to the moment when the error hadn’t completely occurred.

Regarding these hardships, even ordinary people couldn’t imagine them and so, there was no need for Shen Zhixan to bear them.

Although Yan Jin didn’t say it, Shen Zhixian could guess one or two points. His heart began to feel sour. Throwing away his shame, he reached out and hugged Yan Jin. Kissing the corner of his lips, he murmured, “... It’s okay. We’re both fine now.”

He thought for a while and asked, “So what’s going on now? There is only one Soul Tracing Grass, which is Xiao Caoya. Then, why did I see another one in Undead City a few days ago?”

“In the previous life, Soul Tracing Grace developed a soul once it matured. I don’t know how but it could be reborn with us. The one in Undead City was probably its…” Yan Jin rarely spoke so much. After a momentary paused, he gave a vague statement, “One of its souls.

Shen Zhixian was startled. He quietly said, “Is that so? No wonder Xiao Caoya is so sticky with you. It turned out that you raised it big… Then how did you get here? Are you on the mountain? I woke up yesterday and couldn’t find you.”

Yan Jin shook his head. “I’m just an illusion. Probably because of the contract, I was able to project from the wasteland.”

This was a new function of the contract he’d recently discovered. He was still in the wasteland and wouldn’t be able to get away for a long while, but he always remembered Shen Zhixuan in his heart.

Probably because his thoughts and devotions were too strong so the contract kept heating up.

As a result, he was able to master this secret technique and allowed himself to project to Shen Zhixian and keep contact with him.

However, the effect of this trick was very short. It could only be maintained for a brief time at night. When the first light of the sun shined through, the effect would dissipate.

Shen Zhixian raised his hand, pinched Yan Jin's cheek, and exclaimed, “This contract is really powerful. A’jin’s illusion is very real.”

He was planning to ask how this trick was performed so he could project to Yan Jin and have a look on Yan Jin’s end, but before the words could come out, he felt the restriction outside shook fiercely—Someone had broken through the restriction he’d set.

“Martial Nephew! Little Shen! Ah, are you back?”

The moment Fourth Elder returned to Qingyun Sect, he heard that Shen Zhixian had come out from seclusion and that his heart ailment was cured. Fourth Elder was shocked and couldn’t wait until the next morning. He hurriedly avoided people and rushed to Fifth Peak.

He came quietly. Not allowing the junior disciples to pass on the news, he came up the mountain by himself. He was so anxious to find Shen Zhixian that he directly broke through Shen Zhixian’s restriction.

Then he was dumbfounded.

Shen Zhixian was sitting sideways on Yan Jin's legs. Their heads were close together, and Yan Jin's hands were wrapped around Shen Zhixian's waist. Meanwhile, Shen Zhixian's hands were wrapped around Yan Jin's neck. The two looked very close.

Fourth Elder thought to himself that he was petrified. When the wind blows, he will surely scatter.

He stepped back stiffly and pretended to be calm. “Martial Nephew, Martial Nephew’s Disciple, good night. You’re busy. I’ll leave first…”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 70

Shen Zhixian gave a light cough but didn’t panic. He calmly got out from Yan Jin’s lap and stood up to greet Fourth Elder as usual. “Good evening, Martial Uncle.”

Fourth Elder silently looked at him and then looked at Yan Jin.

Shen Zhixian said, “Martial Uncle doesn't recognize us?”

Fourth Elder’s expression was sorrowful. “You... He... What are you doing…?”

He’d forgotten why he came here tonight. Right now, the image of Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin embracing each other intimately was etched in his mind. What in the world happened when the little nephew and the little nephew’s disciple went out to gain practical experience?!

Shen Zhixian tilted his head and thought for a moment. Then, he said euphemistically, “Probably, the normal behavior between ordinary Dao companions?”

Fourth Elder, “....”

Fourth Elder, “???”

While Shen Zhixian thoughtfully allowed Fourth Elder time to process this, he took out the tea set and utensils and brewed tea on the small jade table.

None of Shen Zhixian’s products was low-quality. Once the first-grade

spiritual tea was steeped with boiling hot water, the faint scene of tea finally woke Fourth Elder. He breathed out a sigh and ran his hand over his face. “You need to think carefully about this matter.”

Shen Zhixian’s movements paused.

Yan Jin’s hands on his lap clenched into fists.

Fourth Elder said, “Although, our Qingyun Sect has a habit of not interfering with the private affairs between masters and disciples, but you doing this is not good either. If you think this relationship is good, then you should do things properly and select a good date...”

As Fourth Elder recovered from his shock, he became more and more excited. “There haven't been a lively event in the sect for a long time. Take this opportunity to give the place some liveliness and excitement…”

Shen Zhixian looked at Yan Jin and didn’t know whether he ought to laugh or cry. Seeing Fourth Elder so excited, he could only interrupt in a low voice, “Martial Uncle, we’ll prepare for this. Why did you come so late at night? Is there something wrong?”

Fourth Elder was silent for a moment before he finally remembered the reason why he’d come here. Under the dim light, he carefully studied Shen Zhixian and asked cautiously, “Are you back? Sui Xian?”

—Fourth Elder really did know that his body was seized.

Shen Zhixian’s heart relaxed, and he nodded without hesitation. “Martial Uncle, it’s me.”

He stood up, carefully restraining his expression, and bowed respectfully to Fourth Elder. He said, “Master and Martial Uncle both had worked hard at that time. Junior would never forget it again.”

This appearance, this kind of gesture, could never be made by the half-devil who’d robbed his body. Even when Shen Zhixian’s temperament changed a

few years ago, it still wasn’t the same.

Fourth Elder stopped talking. His thoughts were unknown, but his eyes gradually grew bright with unshed tears. He raised the teacup to his mouth and drank it, not caring that it was still too hot. Then, he spoke a sentence, “If Senior Brother Wen knew, how happy he would be…”

On that day, when Shen Zhixian had his accident, Senior Brother Wen had dragged Fourth Elder to save him and he saw how much Senior Brother Wen was frowning and sighing.

Shen Zhixian was a rare genius. After Shen Zhixian’s body had been seized, Fourth Elder himself regretted it and worked hard for a long time to treat it. But, after Senior Brother Wen was gone, that half-devil who’d robbed Shen Zhixian no longer suppressed himself and began to act more and more perversely. Fourth Elder could do nothing but hold on to a little bit of hope.

At last, his real, little martial nephew finally returned...

Unfortunately, Senior Brother Wen was no longer here to see this scene.

He reached out and lifted Shen Zhixian up. He comforted, “You coming back is enough. It’s enough…”

Once the three of them sat down again, Shen Zhixian began to describe his incredible experience. If he hadn’t experienced it himself, he would also find it hard to believe.

He didn’t want Fourth Elder to worry too much so he spoke about the easier matters and explained them bit by bit. He talked about the trip down the mountain, how they found the inverse scale to heal his heart ailment, and how the half-devil was driven away.

Fourth Elder asked a few question to confirm that he was really back and that everything was okay. Finally, he breathed out a sigh of relief. But, he soon frowned. “So, you were together all this time and were never separated?”

Shen Zhixian nodded, “Roughly.”

Fourth Elder’s frown deepened. “A while back, there was a rumor about Yan Jin...saying that Yan Jin killed many people outside. Several small sects sent people to complain several times.”

“It was Yan Shen causing mischief.” Shen Zhixian took a deep breath and carefully said, “Martial Uncle, there is one matter related to Master that I wanted to talk about…”

.....

In the middle of the desert.

The moon glowed hazily, and yellow sand stretched out as far as the eye could see. The frail youth dragged himself forward with heavy steps, struggling to keep up with the tall man in front. Each step was like dragging stone, leaving behind deep footprints in the sand.

The youth gasped. The sand was blowing too hard, and his lips were a little cracked. Seeing the man’s figure moving further and further away, the youth had no choice but to call out, “Wait… Wait for me…”

The man didn’t turn back nor did he stop. But, his steps slowed a fraction. He said coldly, “You came to the desert yourself, you can also leave by yourself.”

Because the man didn’t turn back to look, he could only hear the youth’s weak voice; he didn’t see how calm the youth’s face was, with no trace of worry or fear. “You saved me. I should repay you…”

“No need.”

The two words, so cold and stiff, allowed for no opening.

The youth gritted his teeth and resisted the urge to go up and beat him—

What's wrong with this man? Why did he even want to come to such a big desert?

Even when he came to such a big desert and saved such a “weak and pitiful” little beauty, he was still so indifferent!

The bald monk was right. This man was a big ice cube with no feelings and deserved to be single all his life.

The youth silently cursed. He pondered if he should pretend to sprain his ankle and fall and put on an even more pitiful act. Suddenly, not far away, the yellow sand suddenly rolled up like an ocean wave, revealing a red cloud that looked like a sand demon traveling at fast speed.

As a “weak and pitiful” man “lacking the strength to even truss up a chicken,” the youth tried to hide behind the ice cube’s back.

However, before he could even come close to achieving his goal, Chen Lie raised his hand and a crimson whip snapped out.

The speed of his movement was as fast as blinking. The youth managed to take two to three steps toward Chen Lie before the sand demon disappeared.

After the dust had settled, they discovered that the red cloud was just a scarlet robe that belonged to some poor man who’d already died. He’d died here, leaving behind only one robe, which that demon was trying to take.

The whip had shredded the robe, scattering it into pieces on the sand. The wind blew a layer of sands over the red pieces, turning them a darker color.

Who knew what instigated Chen Lie. He suddenly raised his hand and the whip shot out.

Sparks emerged from the whip and, within moments, the few pieces of clothing were burnt into ashes. A gust of wind blew over and the ashes scattered until they merged into the sand and ceased to exist.

The youth's eyes were meaningful and deep. "You don't like red?"

Chen Lie acted as if he didn't hear his question.

The youth didn't give up and reached out to touch the fiery red whip. "This whip is very beautiful…"

His hand hadn't fully extended yet when Chen Lie returned the whip back to his wrist. He turned to look at the youth, his expression like an ice blade that froze the youth's hand in place.

The youth looked at him and withdrew his hand.

It was merely one whip. This kind of treasure… he also had one too!

A long, long time ago, he'd had such a whip and often used it to mercilessly kill demons and ghosts!

The wind carried over the sound of soft whimpers. They both looked around and saw a tiny hedgehog huddled behind a stone, half-exposed and shivering.

It was merely a small demon cub.

This desert was very strange and also had demons. It was not surprising that hedgehog demons would appear here. However, looking at the lonely little creature, it was likely that its parents were swallowed up by some other larger demons, leaving it alone and helpless here.

Pity flashed across the youth's eyes.

But Chen Lie hated demons and devils. The moment he saw the tiny hedgehog demon, he immediately raised his hand.

The youth refused to allow it. His eyes flashed and he reached out to hug the man's arm. "Don't hurt it!"

He moved so quickly that Chen Lie found his arm suddenly hugged. He looked coldly at the youth and, no longer caring about the little hedgehog, shook the youth off.

He didn’t hold back his strength. The youth was thrown back by him and the force of it caused the youth to take a few steps back before falling to the ground and landing in front of the little hedgehog.

His hands scrapped painfully against the gravel. But, the youth merely raised his hands casually, patted the sands off his palms and wiped away the little bit of blood.

Ignoring Chen Lie, he turned to look at the little hedgehog.

The little guy was terrified and rolled into a ball with great effort, raising its quills. But it was too small and its quills were not very hard. Touching it wasn’t painful at all.

If it’d encountered another demon, it would likely be impossible for the little creature to protect itself.

The youth looked at it for a moment and silently sighed. Using his body as cover, his fingertips flickered. The Wanggui flower that bloomed on his fingertip fell on the little hedgehog.

The smell of this flower was probably very sweet. The trembling little hedgehog momentarily paused, then stretched out its body. The tiny head came out and bean-like eyes looked warily at the youth. Then quickly, it grabbed the flower against its belly before curling back into a ball and then rolling behind the stone.

The youth laughed. He stood up and turned around but saw that Chen Lie was looking at him coldly. “Wanggui flower--Si Fei?”

Huh?

Did he have a dog nose?

He could still sense such a small flower with such a weak aura!

Si Fei jumped back, avoiding the whip's full wrath. With a smile, he said weakly, "We traveled together for so long. Surely there must be a little sentiment. Don't be so fierce!"

Chen Lie said nothing, but the whip shot out in a blur. Si Fei had no weapon and didn't fight back. As he avoided the whip, he said, "I'm just an innocent, ordinary person. What are you chasing after me for?"

Chen Lie icily said, "You monsters are the ones who are the most vicious and heartless. At that time, if it wasn't for you demons--" His words abruptly stopped, but his attack became more fierce.

Si Fei was keenly aware of what he was referring to. From the corner of his eyes, he saw a dark mass of black qi silently slipped out from the nearby sand and drifted toward Chen Lie.

But Chen Lie was too focused on attacking him and didn't notice at all.

Si Fei's eyes jerked and, almost without hesitation, stopped to face the whip. With a wave of his hand, countless white flowers formed a barrier, cutting off the black qi.

The whip fell on the back of his hand, leaving a bloody gash that burned painfully. That cloud of black qi was also extremely fierce. It bursted out from the barrier of flowers and streaked toward them.

Si Fei bore the brunt of Chen Lie's attack and focused on the movement behind him.

He swiftly made a decision and, with a cry of surprise, "just happened" to bump into Chen Lie's chest. In that critical moment, before Chen Lie could react, he shot out his hand and blocked the black qi.

Chen Lie felt a quick touch on his chest.

He was startled but, in the next moment, he saw Si Fei’s lips curled up into a sly smile. He held the book in his hand and quickly slipped away.

“You're courting death--” Chen Lie’s entire body emitted an icy chill, and each word fell like ice shards. His whip danced, the stroke cold and raw with killing intent.

The back of Si Fei’s hand was still bleeding. That devil qi seemed to smell the blood and became more aggressive and threatening as it moved closer.

After many encounters with Chen Lie, Si Fei was very clear about his strength. Since this devil qi was unlike the ordinary fiends and appeared to be more intrepid, it’s best to let Chen Lie and this devil qi contend with each other.

What's more, this mere devil qi would be incapable of harming Chen Lie.

Seeing this situation, Si Fei took advantage of the opportunity and turned his feet away.

He still held the stack of the bald monk’s destiny papers in his hand. Chen Lie didn’t want to let him go and resisted the devil qi while simultaneously trying to stop him from leaving.

Si Fei avoided his whip and laughed. “I’ll give you this. Don’t worry…” He raised his hand and threw the book at the ice cube.

Chen Lie’s hand instinctively shot out to grab the book. The moment Si Fie disappeared, the devil qi no longer had a target and was confused.

Chen Lie shoved the book into his chest pocket. Without Si Fei distracting him, he showed no mercy this time and quickly dealt the black qi blows after blows from all directions. In the end, there was only a thin, pure black qi left, and while Chen Lie wasn’t pay attention, it quickly slipped into the sand and disappeared.

This battle stirred up a cloud of dust.

Within the sand storm, Chen Lie expressionlessly wrapped the whip around his wrist and pulled the book out.

In the blink of an eye, the book suddenly turned into a ray of light in his hand and what remained was a single Wanggui flower pinched between his fingertips.

He stared at the flower for a long time, smiled grimly, raised his hand, and almost threw the flower to the ground. As his fingers were about to release, he paused. After a moment, his turned his wrist, put the flower away, and pulled out from his chest pocket a thin piece of paper.

—It was a blank destiny paper.

.....

Si Fei didn't look back. Chen Lie, this person, was a ruthless and cold, mad dog. He'd experienced it firsthand and was also unexpectedly almost got caught.

He hurried to the meeting place he'd set with the bald monk. After turning around and examining the path carefully to ensure that Chen Lie hadn't caught up, he was relieved and threw the book back to the bald monk.

The bald monk took it, and his eyes narrowed with a smile. "Aiyayaya, my little darling…"

Only then did Si Fei begin to deal with the wound on the back of his hand. Chen Lie didn't show mercy and the wound looked very bad. He drew out a cold qi to clean it up and said irritably, "Take care of it properly. Next time, it won't come back."

When the bald monk came over to help Si Fei and was pushed away, he paused and opened the book instead.

With the book in his hands, he turned the pages over and characters gradually emerged on the blank sheets.

As the bald monk continued turning the pages, he said, “In the last lifetime, Shen Zhixian’s soul was too weak. I had no choice but to use the destiny paper to open up a world to help him raise his soul… Now that everything is back on track, this little world should also be sealed up.”

He turned to a specific page, closed his eyes slightly, traced a seal over the page, and closed off the small world where Shen Zhixian had briefly stayed.

This was not an easy task. By the time the bald monk was done, his forehead was beaded with sweat. Breathing a sigh of relief, he watched carefully as the characters on the destiny paper gradually disappeared and the parchment became blank once more. Then, he wiped the sweat from his forehead and began to fiddle with the book.

“Yan Jin is now controlling the wasteland, and Shen Zhixian is still alive. Anyway, this life can be regarded as saved. I hope that no more mistakes will be made. Otherwise, the monk’s sin will be too great…”

He flipped through the book at will and suddenly discovered something. His movements stopped and, after a moment, he raised the book closer to carefully look at the inconspicuous tear.

“A’fei, how come a page is missing?”

Translator Xixi:
I love Fourth Elder’s reaction. Haha.

I'm really curious about Chen Lie’s backstory. I totally ship Si Fei and Chen Lie. There’s definitely some chemistry there, and possibly some history. Si Fei said he once had a red whip. Chen Lie had a red whip and he apparently hate the color red, a color that Si Fei often wore. Maybe Chen Lie's whip used to belong to Si Fei? And, what is Chen Lie going to do with that destiny paper?

Finally, this chapter’s title really is “Seventy.” And, Chapter 43, which was named “Untitled” really was named “Untitled” by the author.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 71

Regarding the demons and monsters in the wasteland, the little sects qualifications were too low so they probably didn't know much. However, a large sect like the Qingyun Sect ought to have some records on file.

As Shen Zhixian pulled out some relevant books and read them one by one, he realized that there were only two options available. Cultivators could join forces to suppress the demons again; or, they could let them go and find ways to get along with them peacefully.

Regarding the first method, Shen Zhixian only thought about it for a brief moment before completely disregarding it.

For thousands of years, powerful demons and monsters were suppressed in the wasteland and had been fighting each other. Meanwhile, cultivators had no rivals and had become lazy. If both parties started fighting each other, it was difficult to know who would win.

What’s more, Shen Zhixian believed that no one in this current cultivation realm could re-establish such a powerful restriction seal.

Then, only the second option was left.

It wouldn't be easy. These demons and monsters already had taciturn temperaments and normally wouldn't be persuaded by anyone. Moreover, cultivators had always viewed these creatures as cruel and ruthless. For these two reasons….

Shen Zhixian sighed.

It would be very difficult to reconcile cultivators and demons.

His thoughts scattered and he once again thought of Yan Jin.

During this time, Yan Jin remained in the wasteland. Although he was a natural born devil, the restriction Shen Zhixian had placed on him was just recently removed. His state was still unstable, resulting in a loss of control from time to time. This made it easy for him to hurt people and hurt himself. As a result, he could only stay in the wasteland temporarily to temper himself and conquer the remaining creatures in the wasteland.

He'd done it before in the past life and was very familiar with it. Because these demons and monsters were a bit more simpleminded than cultivators, it wouldn't be too difficult for Yan Jin to subdue them. Once that was done, the fight was over. Moreover, Yan Jin was best at fighting.

The only way for those inside the wasteland to leave would be to go through the Dark Sea. At this moment, Yan Jin was guarding the Dark Sea and pushing back those who wanted to leave with brute strength.

In the wasteland, Yan Jin was fighting against the creatures within and creating great chaos, while outside, cultivators and demons were also fighting fiercely.

Shen Zhixian pondered and came up with a vague idea.

.....

On Song Ming's side.

The chaos outside was not Song Ming's primary concern.

What he hated and was most troubled with right now was the fact that Shen Zhixian had begun to secretly subjugate him.

Sect Leader Wen had personally designated Song Ming as the new sect

leader. Because Shen Zhixian's involvement was not made public, everyone respected Song Ming primarily because they looked up to Sect Leader Wen.

Even though Song Ming's behavior was very smooth, he couldn't hide the fact that his cultivation was too lacking for a sect leader. In Qingyun Sect, which respected strength, it would normally be very difficult for Song Ming to sit on this seat.

The reason they'd tolerated it this long was merely because they didn't have a more suitable candidate for the position. But, now that Shen Zhixian had returned to normal and stood up to replace him, they began to move their minds.

During this time, Song Ming focused all his efforts on guarding against Shen Zhixian. He also asked his confidants to find a way to crowd out Shen Zhixian's claim. The half-devil hiding in his body also thought this would be a good opportunity to urge him to hurry up and get Shen Zhixian's body.

Under pressure from several parties, Song Ming became very anxious and couldn't help saying a few harsh words to the half-devil.

The half-devil mockingly said, "You really are a waste. Even after controlling Qingyun Sect for so long, you still can't deal with Shen Zhixian."

Song Ming sneered. "If you can do it, then why don't you do it instead? Get out of my body and enter Shen Zhixian's body. Go ahead and save me the trouble."

The half-devil exuded a ray of black qi and, against the flickering candlelight, a shadow appeared. After a moment of silence, it suddenly smiled strangely and said, "I have a way…"

The black qi drifted up to Song Ming's ear and drifted in like smoke.

Song Ming shivered, his expression a little hesitant: "This... is it really feasible?"

The half-devil's voice was full of temptations. "Why not? As long as you clean your trail, no one will know what you did. This thing… everyone will only blame the demons in the wasteland for doing evil."

Song Ming's face still showed uncertainty. But, half a moment later, he gritted his teeth and said,
"Okay."

The half-devil let out an unbridled laugh, directly entered his body, and was gone.

However, before Song Ming's plan could be implemented, Second Elder arrived with a heavy face and informed him, "Eighteen senior disciples who recently went north died a few days ago."

Song Ming was momentarily surprised.

Second Elder sighed. "This isn't right. So many of Qingyun Sect's disciples have died and the other smaller sects also couldn't bear it anymore. This situation is very concerning."

The death of eighteen senior disciples was no trivial matter. Second Elder had always been calm and neutral and so Song Ming instinctively believed him. However, at this moment, Song Ming couldn't think of a good solution. He said, "This matter needs to be carefully considered. We'll discuss it with everyone tomorrow."

Nodding, Second Elder murmured "mmn.". Before leaving, he seemed to remember something and turned back to say, "Recently the Assembly Hall is being repaired. Sect Leader, let's meet tomorrow at Songtang Hall."

Song Ming's thoughts were still preoccupied with Shen Zhixian. As a result, he didn't think much about it and merely agreed. Second Elder's eyes flashed, and he slowly walked away.

The next day, Song Ming was almost halfway to the Assembly Hall before

he remembered that it was being repaired. At the halfway turn, he changed route toward Songtang Hall.

However, the closer he got to Pine Hall, the stranger he felt. Suddenly his heart began to beat a little faster. He didn't know why so he merely frowned and endured this heart palpitation as he quickly walked toward Songtang Hall.

Songtang Hall probably hadn't been used in a long time. The place likely hadn't been updated or renovated in several years. A faint fragrance entered Song Ming's nose, and he began to feel as if this place was familiar. But, he'd never been here before.

The place was silent and, as Song Ming stepped into the hall, he wondered why no one was here yet. Then, his eyes suddenly became cold.

--Wrong!

He'd been here before!

This was Sect Leader Wen's main hall. Song Ming was only a small disciple and had no right to enter. Only on that day…

Only that day!

The day that Sect Leader Wen explained about the sect leader position and about Shen Zhixian!

Song Ming froze, as if he was nailed in place. The door behind him closed silently. The light in the room darkened, even as the blurred figure sitting on a high position in the room became crystal clear.

"Song Ming," a gentle, male voice said, the sound echoing in the empty hall. "I called you here today because I have something very important to tell you."

These words were exactly the same as what he'd said that year.

The cold fragrance grew heavier.

Song Ming took an instinctive step back. After a moment, his eyes widened and he rushed a few steps closer to the man in front. He shouted, “Master Wen!”

He looked at the man in disbelief. Shock and terror intertwined on his face, making him look grotesque.

Sect Leader Wen didn’t seem to notice his strangeness and only said gently, “At that time, I had an agreement with you. We agreed that you would only be the temporary sect leader. Once Shen Zhixian’s heart is cured, you would return the position back to him. Right now, he is fine. Why are you still in that place?”

Song Ming retorted without thinking, “When have you and I ever had such an agreement?!”

Sect Leader Wen looked surprised. He momentarily paused, before saying slowly, “You promised in the past. Now, you’re turning your face away?”

Song Ming looked embarrassed. He couldn’t help thinking that Sect Leader Wen had probably accumulated many years of resentment and unwillingness and wanted to make him lose his mind. He said angrily, “Why?! I’ve worked so hard for so many years. Why can Shen Zhixian take it all away from me?!”

“You’re too unfair. You’re so biased!” Song Ming said resentfully. “I worked so hard but it all meant nothing in your eyes. To you, only Shen Zhixian mattered. He’s just a waste who couldn’t even protect himself!”

He’d yelled himself hoarse and exhausted. For a moment, the figure in front of him shifted into Shen Zhixian, then back to Sect Leader Wen. But, no matter who that figure was, he filled Song Ming with hatred.

Perhaps, he’d been grateful to Sect Leader Wen once. But, after many of his

repeated efforts were ignored or denied, his gratitude turned into hatred.

The sect leader position originally did not belong to him and was temporarily given to him to safeguard. But, gradually, he began to want to keep it for himself.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. The sound wasn't loud, but it fell like thunder to Song Ming's ears. He jerked backward and watched as the door opened silently. A junior disciple stood respectfully at the door and said, "...Sect Leader Wen is in seclusion."

Song Ming heard his voice calmly replied, "Mmn, I know."

His voice was very smooth and very normal, but no one knew how violently his heart was beating, or how much it brimmed with excitement and tension. Suppressing the tumbling emotions, he strode out.

The surrounding scene seemed to ripple like a lake, gradually changing into another setting. The hallucinogenic cold scent lingered, eroding Song Ming's awareness. He didn't even realize how strange this all was.

Song Ming stood in front of a door.

Sect Leader Wen, who was in seclusion and was about to advance in cultivation rank, was inside the room.

His eyes clearly reflected his hesitation and an internal struggle. But, gradually, hesitation shifted in resolve. Taking a deep breath, he forced panic into his voice as he yelled, "Sect Leader! Sect Leader! Junior brother is in trouble!"

During seclusion, the outside world should be ignored. But, Song Ming knew that Shen Zhixian was Sect Leader Wen's fatal weakness.

Sure enough, the door opened. Sect Leader Wen sat on the bed with his legs crossed, his expression alarmed. "What happened?"

Song Ming opened his mouth and said, “Master, he suddenly went mad and started hurting a lot of people!”

Afraid that Sect Leader Wen wouldn’t believe him, he displayed the sword wound on his sleeve, which was still dripping blood. Song Ming gravely said, “After junior brother injured many people, he began to mutilate himself. I wanted to stop him but he was too strong…”

He knelt down. “Master, please go and save junior brother!”

The half-devil that had seized Shen Zhixian’s body at that time was indeed very unstable and would often go mad. Moreover, Song Ming always looked like a gentle and honest man. Since Sect Leader Wen had chosen him as the sect leader, he naturally believed in Song Ming’s nature.

Affection for his disciple made him too eager. Sect Leader Wen hurriedly stood up and tried to walk out, forcibly disengaging his body from its meditative state. Within his body, his spiritual qi suddenly became chaotic, and he couldn’t help but spit out a mouthful of blood and tumbled two steps forward.

Song Ming was behind him. Sect Leader Wen turned back, intending to let Song Ming lead the way. But a cold ray of sword light flashed in his eyes--

“Zzing!”

The cold and murderous sword spirit streak in front of Zong Ming, nearly slicing his nose, and causing him to fall backward to the ground.

Song Ming suddenly woke up, only to find that he was still in front of Songtang Hall’s door and had never entered.

An ominous premonition trembled through Song Ming’s body, and he slowly turned around.

He saw a crowd of people.

Standing at the forefront was Fourth Elder with his sword drawn. The tip of his sword was pointed to the ground, where a hole was visible. The sword qi lingering on his body was exactly the same as the one that had just tried to hack Song Ming.

The remaining elders were also present, as well as other groups of people, including his trusted aides and Sect Leader Wen's people. Everyone was present.

Countless eyes were staring at him tightly, and the sight was unbearable.

Fourth Elder gritted his teeth and lifted his sword. "Song Ming! You ungrateful villain! Senior Brother Wen trusted you so much, but you did this kind of thing!"

After being pointed at by a sword, Song Ming's heart actually calmed. He looked around and, not seeing Shen Zhixian, he smiled unnaturally. "Where is my good junior brother? Why not appear?"

There was silence all around. Song Ming no longer covered it up. The contempt in his eyes was thick enough to be tangible. "You think that you're so clever playing this trick on me. I've been sitting on this seat for so many years. Do you think that you can strip it away so easily?" He snapped sharply, "Impossible!

The sky suddenly darkened as Song Ming muttered something, his fingers swiftly drawing an incantation. A barrier appeared, separating him from Fourth Elder's sword. While casting his spell, he hurried backward, thinking to retreat into Songtang Hall.

Then, he felt a pain at the back of his waist, as if something was trying to snap him in half. The momentum threw him uncontrollably forward. If he hadn't reacted quickly and turned to avoid the swords, he would have many bloody holes in his body.

He looked back angrily, only to see Shen Zhixian gracefully retracting his feet. Then, he stomped his foot, as if he'd stepped on something dirty.

Looking at Song Ming, he said lightly, “Still want to come in? You’re too dirty.”

The last string of sanity in Song Ming’s mind snapped.

His hands trembled. His eyes sprayed fire, stripping away the many years of politeness that he’d used to camouflage his true temperament. His benevolent attitude completely torn, his screeched hatefully, “Dirty?! I’ll show you something truly dirty!”

He completed the spell array. Black qi instantly appeared from where Song Ming stood, the dark strands quickly filling the large area. The half-devil finally emerged from within him, smirking.

The sky above their heads completely darkened, and though the sun still shone in the distance, its light seemed to have retracted far away.

Demons and monsters began to rampage, and countless devils clamored tumultuously.

Hidden in the black qi were many demons and monsters, which swept across the flowers and greens, causing the greens to immediately whither and die. Everyone evaded them. Fourth Elder drew his sword and created an invisible barrier to block the menacing demons.

But, this barrier could only hold them back for a moment. Soon, the demons broke through the barrier and began to attack everyone.

The ground under Song Ming’s feet was where the array fell, which connected this place to the wasteland; he’d summoned the demons and monsters of the wasteland.

Countless demons and monsters emerged one after another from the array. Everyone tried their best to kill them, but they could not be killed. In the overwhelming darkness, it was easy to be afraid.

In the confusion, someone shouted, “Sect Leader Shen, save us!”

It was evident who he was shouting for.

Song Ming was wrapped in black qi and, even through the density, he still heard it. Anger shot through him and he was about to refute. But then, he heard a chuckle.

He turned his head, only to find that Shen Zhixian hadn't joined the battle. Instead, he stood not far behind Song Ming. A few fiends lingered at his side, but they didn't rush forward to attack him. They only bowed their heads respectfully.

Song Ming angrily shouted, "Useless! Useless! Kill him!"

The half-devil in his body was also incensed, shouting for them to pounce on Shen Zhixian.

But the fiends stood still, making weird sounds, as if expressing something.

Hatred burned in Song Ming's heart. He pulled out his sword, resolved to kill Shen Zhixian himself.

He knew that he wasn't Shen Zhixian's opponent, but it didn't matter. The half-devil was still in him, and he also called out many creatures. There was no way Shen Zhixian could beat all of them, no way would he leave here alive.

His breath choked off.

Shen Zhixian had pulled his sword.

Even though the sword tip was still some distance away from him, he clearly felt as if an invisible hand was clenching his throat tightly, cutting off his breath!

Frost Return's sword insight had perceived devil qi. The sword rose, it's blade rotating. Shen Zhixian held the sword firmly and made a light stroke.

The sword tip still hadn’t touched Song Ming, but the sword qi completely suppressed him. His hands and feet grew heavy, and he glanced at it from the corner of his eyes, only to find that a large mass of black qi were chaining him in place.

Song Ming looked at Shen Zhixian in shock, feeling wet, warm liquid flowing from his neck.

“One cut for master.”

Shen Zhixian’s eyes grew cold as red blood dripped from Song Ming’s neck. He moved his wrist again, and Song Ming screamed. His spirit root was completely fragmented by the sword qi.

“One cut for Yan Jin.”

If Song Ming hadn’t deliberately led the demons to chase him and Little Yan Jin back then, they wouldn’t have been forced into the wasteland and their encounter wouldn’t have ended in such a tragic way.

Later, Song Ming even dared to bring Little Yan Jin back from the edge of the wasteland and handed him over to the half-devil in an attempt to let them torture each other to death. In the last life, he did succeed.

Another cut, making Song Ming felt as if he’d become as soft as a lump of mud. He was paralyzed on the ground, his agony dragging him to the edge of unconsciousness. Only his eyes could move, and he stared hard at Shen Zhixian.

“This cut is for me.”

Shen Zhixian looked down at the soft, pulp of meat. “Master once taught me that this belonged to me. I must hold on to it and never give it up. Qingyun Sect is my responsibility, and I cannot tolerate you defiling it.”

“Therefore, you should just die. Don’t come out and dirty my eyes.”

Shen Zhixian rarely said such vicious words, but he felt that for Song Yi, even if it was hundreds of times more vicious, it still wouldn’t be enough.

The monsters summoned by Song Ming began to swallow his body clean, leaving behind only a few white bones and a skull. Song Ming only had one final breath left. He struggled unwillingly and forced out a few vague words. “You...the devil…”

Shen Zhixian guessed what he wanted to ask, smiled slightly, and whispered, “No matter what you ordered them to do, it wouldn’t matter. My family A’jin is now the Lord of the Wasteland. Just guess. The demons that you called here, will they help you or will they kill you?”

His family A’jin….

Song Ming used his last strand of awareness to remember who this was. And, then, with a crunch, his head was crushed by a fiend’s large muzzle. It was too late for the half-devil to escape. One half was swallowed by the fierce fiend, while the remaining half was being chewed in its mouth.

Without Song Ming to support it, the array began to fade. Shen Zhixian casted a spell and took control of the connection. He nodded to the fiend and said, “Go back.”

The fiend manifestation responded and issued out a strange command. Hearing this voice, the demons and monsters that had been fighting with everyone shrank back and returned from whence they came.

At the last moment, the fiend lowered itself to face Shen Zhixian and shyly whispered, “We were very good today. We practiced for a long time in the wasteland. When you see the Supreme Lord, please let the Supreme Lord know to stop beating us up.”

After speaking, it disappeared with the connection. Shen Zhixian didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He restrained himself and turned back to look at everyone.

The demons and monsters seemed very fierce, but they had been commanded in advance. Although they fought fiercely, they didn’t kill anyone. At most, some had straightforward injuries that were not life-threatening.

The darkness still remained. Shen Zhixian casted a spell to disperse the remaining devil qi, and the area soon returned to calm. However, the mess around the land still showed signs of danger.

There were people supporting each other and their faces showed that they’d just escaped a calamity. The cultivation realm had been peaceful for such a long time and most of them had never seen so many demons and monsters before.

An elder, who’d always been taciturn and uncommunicative, silently took his sword, silently stood, and silently offered a big bow to Shen Zhixian as the new sect leader.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 72

Due to his identity and many other previous preparations, Shen Zhixian’s transition into the Qingyun Sect Leader’s position was much smoother than Song Ming’s.

He disclosed Song Ming’s guilt to the sect members and sent many letters and gifts to make amends to the small sects that had been injured. He pushed all the mistakes, some half-truths and some half-lies, on to Song Ming’s shoulders.

Those small sect leaders received the heavy gifts but were still somewhat unwilling. However, the demons and monsters that had been raging recently had tossed them enough. Now that Qingyun Sect was putting on an attitude, they hesitated for a long time and found that they could endure.

No matter how bad it was, it would be like striking at a stone with eggs.

Time hastily passed by, and in a flash, a year was gone.

During that year, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were still in separate locations, both very busy with their own work. Often, Yan Jin would cast an illusion at night and the two of them would embrace briefly under the moon.

They deliberately didn’t announce the relationship between them. The sect disciples still thought that Yan Jin was out gaining practical experience. But, sometimes, they would wonder why the sect leader was in such a good mood that day--Naturally, it was because Yan Jin came to visit the previous night.

Fourth Elder guessed something, but Shen Zhixian didn’t mention it and so he didn’t say anything either. He thought that these were young people; he was just an elderly single man. It's best not to embroil himself in it.

Fourth Elders met the other elders’ doubtful eyes and slowly revealed a calm and unpredictable smile.

No one knew that, in addition to a new sect leader, they also gained a new….uh…

Fourth Elder remembered Yan Jin’s cold and indifferent appearance, hesitated for a moment, but still resolutely chose to safeguard his young martial nephew’s dignity. He silently filled in the last half of the words in his heart.

…What about the new sect leader’s wife?

Yan Jin wasn’t idle either. Within a year, he’d completely subjugated the wasteland, including the demons and monsters inside and outside.

The fact that he’d become a devil could not be changed or reversed. The only thing he could do now was to try and get close to Shen Zhixian, to make himself strong, and to protect Shen Zhixian in the future.

The remaining demons and monsters in the wasteland didn’t have strong killing intent in their hearts to begin with and were gradually converted. After receiving the baptism of Yan Jin’s brutal beating, they expressed their surrender without hesitation.

So, not only must they abandon their life of drinking blood, they must also go out from time to time to slay those demons and monsters who had escaped to cause chaos.

The demons and monsters in the wasteland were nearly in tears. Anyway, they were also brothers who’d lived for thousands of years. Now that they could kill each other, this was really too…

Too good!

The demons used all the spirit stones earned from hunting other demons and monsters to buy human food. After surrounding the food in excitement, eating with tears in their eyes—

Oh!

Why didn’t they find this better than raw meat before?

It was a pity that they have too few spirit stones and too little food. Each demon only had a pitiful few and, after a few mouthfuls, it was all gone. Not to mention filling their stomach, it wasn’t even enough to fill their teeth.

A large group of demons came together to discuss the matter. Since Yan Jin no longer needed to curb them, they actively went out of the wasteland to find jobs to earn spirit stones.

It was just that they were demons and not human. Naturally, there were a lot of jokes at first. But, this narrative didn’t last long. They caused good results, which was worthy of praise.

After the people in charge of the larger cultivation sects got together and had a meeting, it was unanimously decided that since the wasteland now had a master and the demons and monsters looked like they’re trying to do better, it was better not to try to re-seal the wasteland. As a result, the two parties made an agreement to try and get along as friendly as possible.

Even if peace was just on the surface, as long as progress could be made, then it was a step in the right direction.

This was Shen Zhixian’s first time attending an inter-sect meeting as the Qingyun Sect Leader. Even when the agreement was being finalized, Yan Jin didn’t reveal his identity. He wore a half mask carved by Shen Zhixian himself.

So, everyone only knew that there was a “Supreme Lord” of the Wasteland, but they didn’t know that he was Yan Jin. Shen Zhixian sat calmly in front of a group of seniors, listening to the agreement being finalized, and was relieved.

His and Yan Jin’s efforts this year were not wasted.

However, even though the problem of the wasteland was temporarily resolved on the surface, there were still many demons and monsters that refused to succumb to the wasteland and escaped. These evils must continue to be hunted down.

As a result, a small gathering was secretly set up. When the message reporting the time and place was transmitted to Shen Zhixian’s hand through a secret method, it was midnight. Yan Jin happened to be there and frowned when he saw the message.

At the last gathering, Yan Jin could only look at Shen Zhixian and could not touch him. He couldn’t even say one sentence. At that time, he was wearing a mask and could only stand quietly in front of Shen Zhixian. After all, he was the Lord of the Wasteland and Shen Zhixian was the Qingyun Sect Leader. Naturally, they would “not know” each other.

After Shen Zhixian opened the message, he smiled and showed the message to Yan Jin without hesitation. In good spirits, he said, “I’ll go out in two days so you won’t have to cast illusions again.”

Casting an illusion to meet with Shen Zhixian was not easy. Regardless of whether it was the caster’s environment or the caster’s targeted environment, the spiritual fluctuation of both locations must remain steady. If the spiritual fluctuation should change, the caster would be easily injured.

Although Yan Jin was already very strong, Shen Zhixian didn’t want him to take too many risks.

Yan Jin’s lips pinched, not answering.

.....

The reason why the gathering was considered a small gathering was because there were very few participants. Only those with strong and decisive power could participate in it. Regarding the annihilation of fiends, they must be cautious and prudent.

Shen Zhixian allowed Fourth Elders to stay behind and head the sect. Pretending to enter seclusion, he put on Sui Xian's face and quietly went down the mountain.

The location of the small gathering was set in Xuanji Tower. Since Xuanji Tower could calculate hexagrams, it was best to carefully discuss matters there first.

When Shen Zhixian arrived in the small town near Xuanji Tower, it was still early. He wasn't in a hurry to enter the sect so he wandered around town.

The town was very lively. As Shen Zhixian sat in a teahouse, he decided that he might as well try to find a bookstore.

That day, there was a young girl sitting in a bookstore. The suppression of women in the cultivation realm wasn't too terrible and it was, in fact, quite common for many women to take power or to head their own business.

Sui Xian's face and temperament wasn't too overly outstanding nor handsome, but it could easily attract the attention of young girls.

When the young girl saw Shen Zhixian, her eyes brightened and her lazy sitting position suddenly straightened. She blinked enthusiastically. "Do you want to buy something? The latest item we have is this picture book made with top-quality pen, ink, paper. Everything!"

She pushed a picture book to the counter and looked at Shen Zhixian in anticipation.

Shen Zhixian originally wanted to say he was just looking around but the

picture book’s cover caught his attention. “Beauty List?”

There was a small word underneath: Immortal.

The young girl saw him look and hurriedly pushed to book closer to him. “It’s a new beauty list! Immortal Edition! Every beauty is here! Men, women and children, they’re all here!”

Shen Zhixian raised an eyebrow and turned a page with some interest.

The young girl had apparently read this book many times already. When she saw him open to the first page, she said without thinking, “The first page is the top of the list. This is the current leader of the Qingyun Sect…”

Shen Zhixian wasn’t prepared to hear his name. He looked down and saw his own portrait. He couldn't help but laugh and turned a few more pages.

In fact, there were many people who looked better than him in the cultivation realm. When Shen Zhixian asked, the young girl laughed and said, “This beauty list is voted by everyone. It depends not only on looks but also on temperament, strength, and more.…”

Who knew that people would have this much leisurely time? Shen Zhixian flipped a few more pages and, smiling, pushed the book back to her.

The young girl was disappointed, “You don't want to buy the book?”

Shen Zhixian was about to shake his head when he caught a glance of the counter where she’d randomly placed another picture book. The cover was similar to this one. However, the only difference was… With his good eyesight, Shen Zhixian was able to see that the word immortal had been replaced with the character “Devil.”

“This is….?”

The young girl looked back and said dismissively, “Oh, that’s the monster’s picture book. Hey, let me tell you. It’s really unsuitable to have a beauty list

for monsters. It should be the ugly list, instead. Except, the top of the list….”

She brought the picture book over and opened it in front of Shen Zhixian. “The top of the list is said to be the Lord of the Wasteland, who is the monsters’ Supreme Lord. He looks pretty pleasing to the eyes; otherwise… there’s not much to mention in this book.” She couldn’t help but complain at little. “The person who compiled the list printed a monster edition, but no one buys them at all! It’s a big loss!”

She pointed a finger at the corner, where a stack of books were piled precariously. The outside of the books were covered in dust.

Shen Zhixian raised his hand and gently brushed his fingers across the portrait on the front page of the album.

It’d captured Yan Jin’s physique and temperament. But, the upper half of his face was firmly shielded by a half mask, giving him an overall appearance of rugged strength. The uncovered portion revealed the stern lines of his chin and the firmness of his mouth.

Shen Zhixian’s fingertips rested on those lips for a moment. The corners of his mouth lifted, and he raised his hand to close the picture book. “I want this one.”

“Ah?” The young girl was surprised and asked in disbelief, “You want this monster book, or do you want the immortal book?”

“I want this.” Shen Zhixian nodded to Yan Jin's picture book and generously put down a top-quality spirit stone.

The young girl did not pick up the spirit stone immediately. She first chose a newer picture book for him, neatly wrapped it in paper, and handed it to Shen Zhixian, wondering, “Why did the young master want to buy this? Almost no cultivators would buy this, so why?”

Smiling gently, Shen Zhixian took the picture book. “Because, the person at

the top of the list is very handsome. I like it very much."

Stunned, the young girl stared blindly at the bookstore's door until it was nearly dark. Since the meeting was set for the next day, Shen Zhixian decided to stay one night alone and go to Xuanji Tower tomorrow.

He was very impressed by the people from Xuanji Tower. From sect's top people down to the junior disciples, they all liked fortune-telling and had even calculated a fated romance for him. He really didn't know how he could bear such enthusiasm.

After booking a room, Shen Zhixian was too lazy to go back out into the street so he simply went downstairs for dinner. Afterward, he headed back to his room to rest.

As soon as he opened the door, he noticed that something was wrong. He quickly evaded sideways, trying to avoid the approaching object. But, Yan Jin knew him too well and intercepted his escape. Yan Jin caught Shen Zhixian against his chest and reached behind him to firmly shut the door.

With a smile, Shen Zhixian greeted, "A'jin." Then, he asked, "Why are you here?"

Although he'd asked the question, he wasn't too terribly surprised. Yan Jin knew him, but he also knew Yan Jin. That night, Yan Jin didn't answer him so he'd guessed that his little disciple would come to him.

Yan Jin hugged him and sat down on the bed, resting his chin on Shen Zhixian's shoulder. He said unhappily, "If I don't come, then I won't see you for a long time."

Shen Zhixian embraced him and said a few words to coax him. All of a sudden, he thought of something and enthusiastically brought the picture book for Yan Jin to look at. "I think this artist isn't good enough. He really can't capture A'jin's excellent looks. Compared to the real person, this was just so-so."

“And this pose couldn’t fully portray A’jin’s charm. There ought to be a few more paintings...Aiya, this artist couldn’t see A’jin’s true face, so he can’t do it justice.”

Yan Jin shot a quick glance at the picture, then stared attentively at Shen Zhixian with a burning gaze. “Sui Xian can paint.”

“Huh?”

“If you want to paint me, I can pose for you anytime.” With his low voice full of temptations, Yan Jin tilted his head, his lips nearly brushing Shen Zhixian’s earlobe. “If looking isn’t sufficient, Sui Xian can even touch…”

Shen Zhixian couldn’t withstand his husky words. His ears grew hot and his entire body turned soft. Unhappily, Shen Zhixian pinched his waist. Once his intellect returned, he said, “What if I want to see you with no clothes on? Will you also let me look?”

Distance only made the hearts grow longer, and separation only increased their longing. In the past year, their relationship had grown by leaps and bounds. The Sui Xian from the past had also returned and, from time to time, he liked to tease Yan Jin.

Later, it was unclear how they set each other aflame. Shen Zhixian couldn’t remember. He just knew that Yan Jin suddenly stopped at the last moment.

In any case, Shen Zhixian was a grown man and would naturally have a reaction. This time, they were both frantic with need. Shen Zhixian was enraptured. He wanted to give in to Yin Jin, wanted very much to indulge in his every movement.

The outcome was that Yan Jin suddenly pulled the brakes.

Shen Zhixian was so angry that he wanted to bite him. His face was flushed red. He was still panting, his chest violently undulating. He gritted his teeth and said, “You’re not going to give it to me?”

Yan Jin was evidently also suffering. His forehead was beaded with sweat. Propping his hands on the bed, he lifted himself up and shook his head, saying with difficulty, “Here’s not good. I'll wrong you…”

Shen Zhixian was very, extremely dissatisfied. His voice was low and angry. “Again, I’m not an unmarried, virgin girl and won’t feel wronged...In the last life, you weren’t this particular!”

In the past year, they were just one person and one illusion. No matter how far they’d gone, they couldn’t take the final step. This time, they were finally reunited with each other. Both of them were physically present. Shen Zhixian couldn’t endure it.

Whether horizontal or vertical, they’d done many things in the last life. This kind of thing, Shen Zhixian wanted to do whatever he wanted.

As long as he was happy, as long as Yan Jin was happy, any way was fine.

However, he never expected that Yan Jin would stop first.

Shen Zhixian was burning with rage, itching to pull out his sword and cut him to pieces. In the end, he couldn’t endure it anymore and lifted his feet to kick Yan Jin out.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 73

By the time Shen Zhixian got to Xuanji Tower the next day, he was still angry.

The person who was able to put out his fire had instead ran away with his pants on. Even though he'd resolved Shen Zhixian's situation a bit before he ran, Shen Zhixian was still not fully satisfied. He recalled a word he'd heard in modern times, and couldn't help but curse him in his heart.

Yan Jin, this troublesome person! What was he up to?

Next time Shen Zhixian saw him, he won't allow him to touch even a finger!

The smile on his face was calm and gentle as usual, but if those who knew him well were to see him at this moment, they would notice that he was gritting his teeth.

Xuanji Tower's master was called Wu Xuan. He and Shen Zhixian were not too familiar with each other, but after many years of studying the path of profound knowledge, he was more attentive and sharper than the normal person. He felt that Shen Zhixian was acting a bit unusual and asked tentatively, "Sect Leader Shen, what's wrong?"

Shen Zhixian smiled and shook his head. "It's nothing big. It's just that on the way here yesterday, I met a very fierce wolf cub. But, after taking a bite, it ran away."

Wu Xuan let out a sound of understanding, but didn't continue to ask.

Instead, he went to greet other people.

The atmosphere of this small gathering was much more serious than the last one. With his expression somewhat grave, Wu Xuan drew the divination hexagram in front of everyone. “The sect standard practice is not to calculate more than one hexagram unnecessarily. This hexagram was originally calculated a few days ago and it would be inconvenient to calculate a new one. Everyone, please take a look at the result.”

After explaining the hexagram’s image to these laymen, he sighed and said, “A really terrible conclusion. It looks like the outcome won’t be favorable and so this trip will be very dangerous.”

“No matter how difficult it is, as the old seniors, we should protect the juniors,” the Yao Sect Leader, Xue Ci, said in a smooth voice. He stroked his chin and said with a chuckle, “We Yao Sect aren’t much but we do have a lot of medicines. Whoever needs it, don’t hesitate to ask.”

The remaining participants, including Shen Zhixian, all expressed their opinions. Although Wu Xuan’s calculations indicated that there will be great dangers, none of them were deterred.

After all, this was related to the safety of the entire cultivation realm. They all filled leading positions at their respective sect and would never shrank away their duty. Like this, the matter was resolved.

The demons and monsters that had escaped did not disperse, and after being hunted down for a time, they'd learned to unit and work together.

Based on the information from various sects, a location was finally identified as the most likely hideout for these creatures.

After much consideration, everyone decided that it was best to lay a siege on these demons and monsters. Even if they could not exterminate these creatures in full, they could still temporarily seal the place.

If too many people participated, the demons and monsters might be

alarmed. After a lot of discussions, it was decided that the people present today should take the lead and then arrange for the disciples to follow up later.

Almost all sect leaders were present, most of whom could be considered as old foxes. The only difference was Qianyin Pavilion, who sent a young senior disciple named Lian Qin. He was more or less about the same age as Shen Zhixian, and he carried a guqin across his chest. In front of his seniors, he was neither servile nor overbearing but was rather refined and courteous.

According to reports, the Qianyin Pavilion sect leader was very ill, and Lian Qin had been running the sect in his stead. He'd been in power for a long time and his qualification was also considered one of the best in the entire cultivation realm. The fact that he was here to replace the Qianyin Pavilion sect leader was also very good.

Wu Xuan looked at him, then looked at Shen Zhixian, and sighed. "We old foxes, we're going to be caught up by the young people soon, ah."

Without further ado, everyone began to make arrangements for the remaining matters. A group of people would attract too much attention. Walking alone also wouldn't be good. In the end, it was decided that they would split into two groups.

One group would lead the front, and a group would lead the disciples in the back.

Shen Zhixian, Xuanji Tower's Wu Xuan, Yan Sect's Xue Ci, and Qianyin Pavilion's Lian Qin were in the first group so they set out first.

After everything was settled, they parted ways. However, as soon as Shen Zhixian arrived at the foot of the mountain, he came face to face with a young man in black.

Seeing this man, Shen Zhixian subconsciously frowned and the anger that he'd just suppressed roared back up.

The young man in black blocked their path. His gaze shifted from Shen Zhixian to Wu Xuan. His expression shifted slightly and he said with some hesitation, “Xuanji Tower Sect Leader?”

The young man’s temperament was cold and his cultivation was indiscernible. Wu Xuan also unexpectedly couldn’t sense his cultivation level at all. He didn’t answer his question and only said, “Who are you?”

The young man in black pulled out a letter from his chest. “The Chen family from Mingzhou sent me.”

Wu Xuan took the letter and opened it. After taking a closer look to confirm its authenticity, his slight frown eased and he said with a smile, “There are many people here. Let’s step aside to speak.”

The five people found a quiet place to communicate.

Mingzhou had many powerful hidden masters. However, they have all retreated from the world and only the juniors in the clans would occasionally come out to practice.

A while back, Wu Xuan sent an invitation letter just to give it a try. However, he didn’t have much hope in his heart. A couple days ago, when he saw that there was no representative from Mingzhou, he didn’t take it to heart and wrote the whole thing off.

However, Wu Xuan was still not convinced by the letter. He cautiously asked for the young man’s identity. If the young man recognized his suspicion, he didn’t say anything. He only took out a finely carved jade ornament.

The jade ornament emitted a pure spiritual qi, and it was also proof identifying that it’s holder was a member of one of Mingzhou’s hidden clans.

Wu Xian said, “Please excuse my offense,” and reached out to take the jade

ornament for careful study. Everyone knew that Wu Xuan was the most knowledgeable about Mingzhou's hidden clans.

The jade ornament, which was the unique symbol representing the Mingzhou's Chen family, was indeed authentic.

Wu Xuan's smile became more sincere. To make a long story short, matters were discussed once more and eventually the young man named Chen Yan was allowed to join them.

Shen Zhixian looked askance at him and let out a light, indeterminate chuckle.

This Chen Yan.

Among the people they knew, only one person, Chen Lie, had a relationship with the Mingzhou's Chen family. Who knew what method Yan Jin used to get the jade ornament, which allowed him to pretend to be a member of the Chen family.

Yan Jin also changed his appearance to conform with his act as a member of the Chen family. Shen Zhixian didn't expose him. He just pretended not to know him and didn't speak to him at all. Along the way, everyone rode on their mounts. Yan Jin "unintentionally" drew nearer to Shen Zhixian's side.

Shen Zhixian pretended not to see him and spoke to Lian Qin with a smile.

Yan Jin's lips tightened and, when he looked at Lian Qin, his eyes had a glint of danger. Lian Qin sensed the danger and turned to look but only saw a silent young man sitting upright and looking straight ahead.

After traveling for a few days like this, the always laughing Xue Ci, the leader of the Yao Sect, who was as benevolent as his name implied, felt that something was off.

Although they accepted Yan Jin on the surface, they were actually quite guarded against him. After all, those hidden clans from Mingzhou hadn't

been seen in a long time. No one knew their true intentions. Moreover, this young man...

Was he paying too much attention to Sect Leader Shen?

After seeing that the young man had chosen to sit next to Shen Zhixian, he smiled and said mildly, “Gentleman Chen had met Sect Leader Shen before?”

“I don’t know him.”

“I’ve looked forward to meeting him.”

Their two voices sounded at the same time. Mu Xuan smiled and brought his tea up to his mouth. After joking a few sentences, he changed the topic.

After a little rest, they continued their journey.

As they were leaving the teahouse, Shen Zhixian fell back toward the end of the group and Yan Jin naturally slowed down.

A flash of green quietly shot out of Yan Jin’s sleeve and quickly jumped onto Shen Zhixian’s sleeve. It climbed up Shen Zhixian’s shoulder, softly chirping.

A few people nearby heard this sound and looked back. Xue Ci’s face lit up the moment he saw Xiao Caoya. He was from Yao Sect, which specialized in medicine, and naturally paid a lot of attention to spirit plants. Although he didn’t know what kind of spirit plant the little bud sprout was, he could see at a glance that it was unusual. “This is Sect Leader Shen’s little spirit plant?”

Since Yan Jin didn’t speak, Shen Zhixian didn’t deny it either. Smiling, he said, “Just raising it for amusement.”

Spirit plants that had gained consciousness were extremely rare, but still not impossible to find. What was even more rare was the fact that Shen Zhixian

seemed to be affectionately raising the little spirit plant. Xue Ci looked at it again and, after sensing Xiao Caoya’s vigorous spiritual qi, felt emotionally moved. “I wonder if this old man can take a closer look?”

Xiao Caoya shook, and before Shen Zhixian could respond, it jumped to Xue Ci's hand and began to shake its leaves energetically at him.

Xue Ci was very familiar with handling medicinal spirit plants and was very gentle. Xiao Caoya didn’t reject him at all and rolled around in his palm.

Xue Ci took out a good medicinal pellet and fed it to Xiao Caoya. As two small leaves held the big pellet, Xiao Caoya laughed excitedly. Soon, the pellet turned into spiritual qi and was absorbed.

It let out a satisfied belch and then stood up and solemnly bowed to Xue Ci.

Xue Ci couldn't help laughing. He felt very reluctant to hand the little grass bud back to Shen Zhixian. He said, “This little thing is unexpectedly very clever and isn’t shy with strangers. In the future, it shouldn’t take food easily from strangers.”

Shen Zhixian thanked him for the medicinal pellet and put Xiao Caoya on his shoulder. He said half-jokingly, “I probably don’t have the ability to raise pets. The little ones that I raise always like to run away.”

During this journey, since everyone held similar positions , it wasn’t difficult for them to get along with each other. They would even often joke around. Xue Ci asked, “Sect Leader Shen also raised another little spirit pet?”

Shen Zhixian climbed onto his mount, which was a pegasus. After he settled in, he let out a faint smile and replied, “I also kept a very fierce wolf cub. It’s a pity that after I raised it, it bit me and ran off.”

“Oh, it is a pity indeed…”

Xue Ci laughed and climbed up to his mount. It was a lazy-looking black-shelled tortoise, with his head always shrinking and his limbs sticking out.

Naturally, flying was always faster than running on the ground, and they were also in a hurry. This was the first time Shen Zhixian flew alone, without Yan Jin's company, and his fear of heights trickled back up. But, it wasn’t too strong this time, which allowed him to endure and mask his discomfort.

This time, Yan Jin also sent Xiao Caoya to accompany him. As Shen Zhixian watched Xiao Caoya danced on the pegasus’s head, he began to breathe easier and felt a little more at ease.

Yan Jin, as usual, was not far from his side, flying almost at the same speed as him, with some distance between him and others.

Shen Zhixian was counting Xiao Caoya’s jumps and flips when Yan Jin’s voice sounded in his ears. It was transmitted by a spell so that only he could hear it.

“I also have experience in raising a pet…”

Shen Zhixian was still in the middle of counting Xiao Caoya’s movements. When he heard Yan Jin’s words, he missed a number and didn’t even notice when Xiao Caoya flipped over once more.

“But my kitten is ignoring me. What should I do?” Yan Jin’s low voice had a trace of apprehension and guiltlessness as he whispered, "I've offended my kitten and now he’s angry. Since Gentleman Shen is rich in experience, can you teach me how to coax him back? "

Shen Zhixian, “????”

Shen Zhixian picked up Xiao Caoya and wanted to throw it back to Yan Jin. However, after thinking about it, he held back. After putting Xiao Caoya back on the pegasus, he moved his lips angrily.

No sound was made, but his words passed into Yan Jin’s ears with a secret spell.

Through gritted teeth.

“....Enduring a beating wouldn’t be too bad.”

.....

After rushing throughout their journey, everyone finally arrived at the place where the demons were hiding. It turned out to be a high mountain with a cave dug out at the foot of the mountain. Although the inside was obscure from view, there were faint noises that sounded like small animals scratching at the dirt.

Shen Zhixian hovered his hand over an overturn boulder. His spiritual knowledge entered the rock, and he was surprised to find that the place didn’t have a single trace of disruption. He extended his spiritual awareness and frowned after a moment. “There’s spiritual qi as well as devil qi.”

He took a breath and said, “This place is a secret realm.”

This whole mountain was a secret realm.

“These demons actually knew how to hide in a secret realm.” Wu Xuan calculated on his fingers. “Partly terrible, partly auspicious. It’s really unclear.”

As soon as his voice fell, Lian Qin suddenly called out, "Be careful!" and at once, smashed his guqin.

From within the dark cave came a strange sound. The mass of black qi, which hit by the guqin, seemed to snarl. Suddenly the ground began to tremble. It was as if an invisible barrier had opened at the cave’s mouth and wind was sweeping out of it, spewing sand and dust.

The whole mountain was shaking, as if it was going to rise up.

Shen Zhixian abruptly said, “This secret realm is moving; they’re trying to leave!”

Translator Xixi:
You guys have noticed how smooth Yan Jin has gotten, right? Lol. But, don’t forget that he'd completely regained the memories from his past life, which included being in a romantic (and sexual) relationship with Shen Zhixian. This also explained how he was suddenly able to become so powerful. Not to mention, in this current lifetime, they’ve been in a relationship, albeit kind-of long distance, for a year now.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master
Chapter 74

The mountain was not small. With a loud boom, it began to move clumsily, causing stones and boulders to tumble and roll on to the ground.

Everyone dodged aside, trying to avoid the large falling debris.

After falling for a long time, the rocks suddenly stopped and consciously began to lift back up and follow the secret realm mountain’s ascent.

The secret realm moved slowly at first, little by little. It’s bottom dragged awkwardly against the ground, like a scooting toddler, and then gradually became faster. Those large fallen rocks couldn’t catch up fast enough.

The rocks were in a hurry and followed the secret realm one after another like a tail.

Everyone stood in front of the mountain, their figures as small as flies in comparison.

Lian Qin leaped in front of the mountain, raised the guqin in his hand, and slammed it against the ground.

Dust and gravel rose as a large pit was cratered on to the ground. Spiritual power passed along the guqin to the ground, stirring up a high wall of earth and stone in front of the mountain.

The mountain was momentarily blocked. It crashed into the high wall with a loud bang but couldn’t manage to break it. It staggered backward and paused. The rocks and boulders trailing behind slammed into the mountain,

then happily circled around it.

Shen Zhixian shot Lian Qin a complex look. His gaze lowered to the guqin —Couldn’t he play this guqin?

Perceiving his gaze, Lian Qin looked back at him, hugged his guqin to his chest and very calmly said, “Time is tight. Hitting is better.”

Only then did Shen Zhixian discover that his guqin was a stringless guqin. “.....”

What guqin?! This was actually just a mallet!

However, before everyone could breathe a sigh of relief, the mountain regained its strength and once more slammed against the high wall!

The wall of earth, which was solidified with spiritual force, shuddered and numerous cracks began to appear. Finally, the wall crumbled completely, leaving the mountain unhindered. It began to move away faster and faster.

No one could stop it. They could only create obstacles, like Lian Qin and his walls. However, this only momentarily delayed the large mountain before it soon managed to overcome the obstacles and continue to move forward.

Seeing it moving faster and faster away, Shen Zhixian gritted his teeth and clenched the hilt of his sword.

After imbuing the sword with spiritual force, he said in a deep voice, “Frost Return!”

Sensing the devil qi lingering in the secret realm mountain, the restless Frost Return issued a clear hiss. It soared in the air and, under Shen Zhixian’s command, began to emit a bitingly cold sword intent as it hung suspended over the top of the mountain.

The sword spirit looked just like the real sword, only slightly smaller and

more transparent. Although it looked tiny hovering at the top of the mountain, it felt extremely oppressive. Under its oppression, the mountain began to tremble, causing more rocks and debris to tumble down.

Yan Jin waved his hand to strengthen the barrier for Shen Zhixian, firmly protecting him and allowing him to concentrate on controlling Frost Return's sword spirit. The others realized what he was doing and began to focus on preventing the rocks from falling on Shen Zhixian.

Dangerous and motionless, the sword intent was firm.

Shen Zhixian took a deep breath and communicated with the sword intent. Circulating his spiritual force, he flipped his wrist, commanding the sword to ruthlessly pierce down. “Frost Return, fall!”

The sword spirit burst with great strength, it’s body gleaming. After condensing into a sharp blade, it shot straight down.

The mountain suddenly jerked to a stop.

Everyone watched as the small but powerful Frost Return sword spirit penetrated the entire mountain, piercing straight through the middle, and completely pinning it to the ground.

The large mountain seemed to be angry. It made a booming sound, like muffled thunder echoing from a distance. But, no matter how much it struggled, it couldn’t go any further.

Shen Zhixian’s eyes briefly fluttered closed. His hands trembled imperceptibly as he returned the physical sword back to its sheath. After settling his mind, he said, “Frost Return can’t hold it for long. Should we go in or leave?”

When the secret realm mountain had tried to run, they could see that it was very heavy. But, it also seemed to be very smooth and very hard to stop. The whole mountain was like a hard tortoise shell, unmoved by force or persuasion. If they leave now, the next time they returned, the demons and

monsters inside would be more prepared. Even then, they would have to worry about finding it first.

Wu Xuan calculated on his fingers and found that the outcome was still unclear. His expression grew somewhat heavy, and his eyes had a trace of hesitation. Finally, he broke the jar and said, “Since we’re already at this stage, it’s better to go in and take a look. The mountain is like a steam bun. We shouldn’t be trapped or killed inside.”

After saying this, he moved forward as if to enter the dark cave. Xue Ci’s thoughts were deeper than his. He pulled him to a stop and said, “Wait, now’s not good.”

Wu Xuan frowned. “What’s the matter?”

“Our disciples haven’t arrived yet. This secret realm can move. Should we enter now, this secret realm could take us along as it tried to run again…” Xue Ci pondered and said, “If you really want to go in now, you should leave someone to guard outside.”

This also made sense.

But, who should stay outside?

Wu Xuan turned around to face several people. His gaze finally fell on Shen Zhixian but before he could speak, Shen Zhixian said, "Master Wu is an expert at calculating and tracking. It would be better for you to stay outside to meet the disciples. Frost Return’s sword spirit was already half-buried inside the mountain. I am its owner and can somewhat perceive its location. It is only appropriate for me to enter the secret realm."

This statement was also reasonable and fair. Since the situation was urgent, they didn’t hesitate for too long. Wu Xuan decisively said, “In that case, I'll guard outside. Gentlemen, please defend the rule of law.”

After the mountain was nailed down by Frost Return’s sword spirit, it was irritable for a while. However, since it was unable to break free, it calmed

down and returned to its original appearance. Occasionally, a low roar would come out from within the cave.

Shen Zhixian and the other four men held their weapons and carefully entered the cave.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were the first to advance. As soon as Shen Zhixian entered, he realized that it was so dark, he could hardly see his five fingers. He suddenly thought of that time in the wasteland. But, as soon as he thought this, a hand closed over his own.

Their fingers weren’t intertwined. It was more like an adult holding a child’s hand. He was holding Shen Zhixian’s entire hand protectively against his palm, rubbing his thumb reassuringly on the back of his hand.

Shen Zhixian struggled a little, but the other person only gripped tighter. He glanced in Yan Jin's direction. His mouth opened, and he silently cursed, “Bad cub.”

Even though he knew that the other party couldn't see, he couldn't help making this childish gesture.

After doing this childish action, Shen Zhixian immediately snapped out of it. He let out a light cough and gave up the struggle. After moving forward a few steps, he frowned doubtfully and said, “Where are the others?”

Silence wrapped around them. Except for his and Yan Jin’s breathing, he couldn’t hear anything else.

Xue Ci and Lian Qin, who were supposed to follow them, had disappeared.

Shen Zhixian let out a small flare of spiritual qi, illuminating the surrounding area.

This room was made entirely of hard stone. Shen Zhixian moved closer to the stone wall and saw the thin, delicate lines etched on to its hard surface.

However, the stone wall had been scratched by some sharp things, destroying most of the delicate and beautiful murals.

“It seems that there was a monster hiding here, grinding its claws.” Shen Zhixian noticed a thin strand of black qi hugging the stone wall. He shook his finger and sent a spark toward the black qi. The moment it came into contact with the spark, it let out a hiss and was immediately burned out.

They carefully looked around and finally found a dark stone door standing slightly ajar.

Yan Jin shoved at the door. The door wasn’t too heavy and crunched open, revealing a path so narrow that it would only allow one person to pass through at a time.

Stone walls hugged both sides of the narrow path, looking so close together that it appeared as if they would move closer and touch at any moment. She Zhixian let out a sound and stepped in first.

There were several luminescent night pearls lining the path, with a few were inlaid along the wall. They were rather small so the light was fairly dim. Shen Zhixian put away the small sparks and walked forward.

The stone walls were uneven, its murals scratched into a mess by monster claws. Even most of the night pearls lining the grounds were scratched by them.

Shen Zhixian stopped and studied the painted murals, but he still couldn’t understand what it was about. After pondering for a while, he turned his head to look at Yan Jin and asked, “What do you think happened?”

Shen Zhixian was looking at the original pictures, but Yan Jin instead focused on the scratches. “This seems to be… the wasteland.”

“What?”

Yan Jin raised his hand and traced a few places on the scratches with his

fingertip. He vaguely sketched out a scene. “This is the Dark Sea that leads outside the wasteland. These irregular circles are probably demons and monsters.”

Shen Zhixian took a closer look and found that it really did look a bit like it. He wondered, “What's the point of them scratching such a picture?”

"On both sides of the Dark Sea, one bank lies deep in the wasteland while the other bank is opened to the outside. The wasteland’s seal allowed for easy entrance but made it difficult to leave. Little demons couldn’t leave so they would often wander near the Dark Sea. Some would even try crossing it."

Yan Jin added lightly, “So monsters and fiends from within the depths of the wasteland would often stay at the edge of the Dark Sea in order to catch and eat those little demons.”

Shen Zhixian murmured “Ah,” and continued to move forward thoughtfully.

After they’d walked for a while, another stone door came into view.

“There’s no other route. Shall we push open the door and see?”

Shen Zhixian reached out to touch the door, but Yan Jin hugged him, whispering, “I’ll do it.”

The surroundings made it difficult for them to change positions. Shen Zhixian was about to say he could do it; he wasn’t weak. But, Yan Jin had already clasped his hands around Shen Zhixian’s waist and forced him around. As they changed positions, their chest pressed and dragged against each other.

Shen Zhixian, “....”

Before he realized it, Yan Jin was already standing in front of him. He lifted his eyes just in time to see Yan Jin placed his hand on the stone door and

pushed hard.

— “Supreme Lord, the bald monk is here again! He wants to see you! Will you see him?”

In front of Shen Zhixian, there was only darkness. He could sense that he was leaning against a man’s arms and the man’s warm hands were wiping him down, his movements incredibly gentle.

“No.”

“Yes, but he said that it’s about the young master…”

The hand’s movement paused. After a moment, Shen Zhixian felt himself being laid down on a soft mattress and was covered with a comforter.

A small stove was hidden inside the comforter. It was very warm but the temperature didn’t feel as good as the warmth from the man’s body. Shen Zhixian shrank in the comforter, feeling cold and hungry. The main thing was hunger. He hadn’t felt so hungry in such a long time. He was so hungry that his stomach burned and he felt as if he would faint.

It was this hunger that helped Shen Zhixian regain his senses.

Supreme lord, bald monk, young master.

These three titles made it easy for Shen Zhixian to recall the previous life.

Shen Zhixian wasn’t sure if Yan Jin was also stuck in the illusion. He struggled to wake up, but the hunger left him with no energy, and even his eyelids couldn't be forced to open. He could only hear the bald monk’s voice, “The Soul Tracing Grass has been nourished by your heart’s blood for many years, and it’s almost ripe. I have a way…”

There was a rummaging sound, followed by the sound of papers, as if the pages of a book were being flipped through. “...Right now, his soul is too weak. I can send him to a small world inside the book to allow him time to

raise his soul and wait until the Soul Tracing Grass is fully matured. Afterward, fate could be retraced and reversed. It's just that, for the Soul Tracing Grass to completely mature, you might have to offer up this life…"

The bald monk spoke very tactfully, but with this sentence, combined with the previous words, Shen Zhixian could guess what "offer up this life" meant.

Shen Zhixian's heart began to pound loudly, sounding as if the heart would burst at any moment—no wonder Yan Jin never went into details about their rebirths. It was because of this!

No wonder he was able to connect with Yan Jin in the truest sense of the word. He thought it was because of the contract. Now, he knew that it was because Yan Jin used his own heart's blood to raise Soul Tracing Grass, and Soul Tracing Grass, in turn, saved Shen Zhixian and brought him back.

They had long been united in heart and blood, as if they were a single entity.

As Shen Zhixian struggled to wake, he heard the illusioned Yan Jin said, "Good." Suddenly, the entire illusion shattered and, before he could even blink, Shen Zhixian returned.

The real Yan Jin still had his hand on the stone door, his eyes closed. He seemed to still be caught up in the illusion, and his expression was tense.

The space was too narrow, allowing only for Shen Zhixian to hug him hard from behind. He lightly patted his face. "A'jin, wake up."

Yan Jin didn't open his eyes. His lips moved and when he said, "Good," the word was so achingly sad.

Shen Zhixian froze. Before he could react, Xiao Caoya suddenly shot out from his sleeves and two blades of grass slammed against Yan Jin's face.

Shen Zhixian, "...."

Xiao Caoya was not an ordinary little bud sprout. Back at Qingyun Sect, when it wanted Shen Zhixian to get up, it would shred countless comforters with its leaf blades.

Shen Zhixian lifted Xiao Caoya and set it aside, “... Don’t slap.”

Xiao Caoya let out a tsundere humph, drifted aside, and chirped a few times.

However, those few slaps were very effective. Yan Jin's expression gradually returned to clarity. After seeing Shen Zhixian, he held his hand tightly, and said, "Sui Xian."

His tone of voice carried a vague sense of having regained what was lost.

Shen Zhixian looked at him, and suddenly asked, "What did you see? What happened in the last life?"

Yan Jin grunted, looking like he still had no intention of speaking about it. Shen Zhixian silently remembered this in his heart and decided that later, when they have more time, he would recount the last life with Yan Jin piece by piece.

Yan Jin, who was taller than him, obstructed the door. Shen Zhixian lightly pushed him aside and placed on foot out the door to have a look around. The area on the other side was pitched black, making him unable to see anything. However, he felt a vague sense of danger.

As he was wondering whether to go in or not, the stone door began to rumble shut, blocking the dangerous aura from the other side.

When Yan Jin reached out and tried pushing it again, they found that it wouldn’t bulge.

The path was becoming increasingly more narrow. Shen Zhixian tilted his head to look and found that the stone walls on both sides were beginning to

slowly move toward one another.

They both reached out at the same time to push against opposing walls. This slowed the walls somewhat, but it was still inching forward. Shen Zhixian frowned. “This is forcing us to go back?”

It was already very narrowed in here. If they continued to stay, they would become flattened sooner or later. Shen Zhixian turned decisively, holding Yan Jin's hand, and took a step back. “We’ll talk later--”

Even though the path back to the previous door was fairly short, Shen Zhixian began to worry that they wouldn’t be able to get out in time. He was so worried that he was ready to use spiritual force to increase their pace. Who knew that before he’d even completely finished speaking and just as his raised foot was about to touch the ground, their surroundings suddenly changed.

They had returned to the original stone room.

The difference is that although the stone room was still dark, this time, there was some light. A few luminescent night pearls were embedded at the top of the stone wall, emitting a mild light.

Xue Ci and Lian Qin stood not far away, looking as if they were deeply pondering over something. When they heard movements, they turned their heads, and their eyes fell on Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin’s clasped hands.

Shen Zhixian, “...”

He smiled casually but didn’t let go of Yan Jin’s hand. “Just now, I felt really hungry. I reached out to grab it, thinking that it was a big drumstick.”

Translator Xixi:
When I first read about Lian Qin and his guqin, I was imaging an elegant xian playing the guqin and using its beautiful notes as weapons. But, the

reality was...it might as well be a hammer the way he was using it. LOL. Fantasy bubble, shattered.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 75

Yan Jin didn’t say anything. Only when Shen Zhixian finally let go of his hand did he lower his eyes, concealing the trace of unhappiness within those depths.

Red flashed over his eyes, but he quickly suppressed it.

After Shen Zhixian let go of Yan Jin’s hand, he changed the topic. Walking over to Xue Ci, he asked, “Did you just come in?”

Xue Ci and Lian Qin glanced at each other and shook their heads.

Xue Ci said, “I’ve been in for a while. It was dark when I first came in but, later, I walked through a very narrow path with night pearls on the wall. There was a stone door at the end of the path…”

Normal people would want to push open the stone door. But, Xue Ci didn’t. When he touched the stone door, he felt a strong, dangerous breath on the other side. He hesitated for a while but didn’t try to open it. Eventually, he dropped his hand and stepped back slightly.

As he stepped back, he stumbled over a night pearl that had appeared on the floor out of nowhere.

Xue Ci responded quickly and immediately used the stone wall to support himself. As he was thinking about how a night pearl could have fallen so silently from where it was embedded in the wall, he raised his eyes and saw a horrifying creature. Half of its body was buried in the stone door and it was looking at him hungrily.

The demon beast began to twist its body, as if trying to come through.

The terrain was very narrow and was not at all conducive to fighting. Xue Ci only hesitated for a moment before he turned and ran.

He used spiritual power and ran quickly, but the demon beast was very fast. With a roared, it fell from the stone door, dropped to the floor on all four legs, and began chasing after Xue Ci.

The demon beast's smelly breath sprayed the back of Xue Ci's bare neck and he could feel something wet and sticky there. Xue Ci thought of the demon beast's disgusting saliva and he ran faster and faster.

But no matter how quickly he ran, the spirit beast also followed quickly. After a while, Xue Ci took a moment to look back. But, when he was about to turn around, he once again felt as if the demon beast was very close behind him and could even feel its breath spraying the back of his neck once more.

"Later, I ran out of the path with the monster still chasing me. There was darkness in front of me and I couldn't use a spell to illuminate the path. Then, I fell into a pool of water…" Xue Ci continued, his frown deepening. "After I dropped into the water, I immediately knew that the situation was very bad. I tried in vain to find the banks but found that the demon beast was waiting for me there. On the water, there were also many other things…."

He tried to use a spell to raise the rocks at the bottom but found that they refused to bulge. The things in the water were already very close at hand. Xue Ci saw that there were too many of them and the only thing he could do was swim desperately forward. The surroundings were very dark so when he saw a ray of light in the distance, he instinctively began swimming toward the light. He didn't know how long he'd swam before suddenly becoming aware that there were no longer any movements behind him at all.

Once he realized this, he began to sink. No matter how he struggled, he couldn’t remain afloat in the water. The water seemed to rush over him in all directions. He used a spell to protect himself from the water and, in the next moment, he found himself standing on the ground in the dark. The water had silently disappeared completely. A bright light entered his eyes and he involuntarily blinked.

When he opened his eyes, he found that he was in a stoop posture with his hand reaching out, as if to pick up the night pearl on the ground. There was a rumbling sound and the stone door flew open. Lian Qin suddenly wildly rushed out, looking as if he was going to smash someone with his guqin at any moment.

Shen Zhixian listened for a moment, then looked at the direction they were originally facing. Then, he looked back at the direction he and Yan Jin had came out from.

The two stone doors were almost identical.

Lian Qin calmly said, “There’s more than that.” He looked around and added, “There’s seven doors total.”

Of the seven doors, three were already opened; the three doors that they’d each respectfully came through. Lian Qin hugged his guqin and thought for a moment. “Behind each door is a narrow pathway, with murals on the two stone walls lining each path. But, these images were altered, making them unclear.”

For his part, Lian Qin also did not choose to open the stone door. He'd paused on the spot. After a moment, he chose to take a few steps back, but the door ended up opening by itself.

The situation was not good. It seemed to have opened right into a den of demon beasts. The narrow path was immediately covered with black qi, and a large swath of demons and monsters scrambled out from behind the stone door.

Lian Qin didn’t expect such a situation. He retreated while fighting. As the battle rose, all the demons suddenly disappeared. He saw that there was another door in front of him. After opening the door, he saw Xue Ci stooping down to pick up a night pearl.

Their experiences seemed very exciting. Shen Zhixian remembered the desperate hunger that he’d felt and suddenly thought that it was nothing when compared to Lian Qin and Xue Ci’s experiences.

Since this vision involved his and Yan Jin’s identity in their previous life, he didn’t go into much details. He just said, “We happened to be in the same place when we came in. We saw the door and, after walking through the path, came upon another door. When we opened it, we didn’t see anything. We just felt really hungry…. Later the stone walls began to close and we decided to go back. We only took one step when we suddenly ended up here.”

Because Yan Jin was still pretending to be a member of Mingzhou’s Chen clan, Shen Zhixian only gave a brief account of the depictions on the stone walls. He didn’t directly mention what Yan Jin had said about the wasteland monster’s behaviors and could only vaguely allude to it.

—So the "drumstick" that Shen Zhixian mentioned earlier wasn’t a joke?

Initially, Xue Ci and Lian Qin couldn’t help but think crooked thoughts. Xue Ci even breathed a silent sigh of relief.

This was good, this was good. The cultivator sects were not deeply connected with the Mingzhou clans, leaving a gap between the two. But, en route, after watching the Chen family’s child show such diligence to Shen Zhixian, Xue Ci couldn’t help but worry. He'd then continued to watch Shen Zhixian uneasily.

Along the way, he’d decided that he quite liked Shen Zhixian. He was strong and was neither arrogant nor hot-tempered. Instead, he had calm temperament. This kind of person was quite excellent and therefore must not be abducted by the people from Mingzhou!

Xue Ci pulled back his increasingly crooked thoughts and began to think about the secret realm once more.

Even though they've been here for so long, they still hadn't seen a real, physical monster. This secret realm was really weird and confusing.

Shen Zhixian couldn't even imagine the many twists and turns in Xue Ci's mind. He speculated, "Each door is different. The mural was created by the original secret realm. It may be something profound but it was destroyed by the demons and was accidentally turned into something else."

The danger they'd felt behind the stone door couldn't be an illusion. But, since they'd entered without encountering anything really terrible, Shen Zhixian guessed that this was probably the secret realm creator's original intention. However, it was destroyed by the ignorant demons and monsters so the destructiveness was lessened.

Xue Ci actually had a similar idea. He turned his head and wanted to ask what Lian Qin thought, but he saw at once that Lian Qin's ten fingers were clasped tightly around the body of his guqin and his tears were streaming down. This, in contrast with his calm expression, was really weird.

Xue Ci was momentarily stunned, "What's wrong?"

Shen Zhixian also discovered that something was wrong. His first reaction was to explore the surrounding area with his spiritual sense. He vaguely sensed something but before he could speak, Lian Qin had already stopped his tears and calmly said, "Tear demon."

There was a faint, damp breath coming from a corner. They looked over and saw that, in the night pearl's faint light, a stone door had opened. A round, water ball jumped out, leaving behind wet traces everywhere it touched.

The water ball made a rumbling sound and stumbled about, making several turns in place.

A dark object collided with the water ball, sending the object bouncing toward the stone wall. Before it could hit the wall, Lian Qin waved his sleeves, rolling up a gust of wind to block the object's momentum. He held it in his hand and looked down. His pupils dilated slightly.

It was a xun.

At the same time, a young man dressed in blue hurriedly ran out from behind the stone door. He immediately saw the water ball on the ground and rolled up his sleeves to smash it.

Lian Qin's expression shifted slightly. "Duan Yuan?"

Startled, the young man jerked, missing the water ball. It immediately bounced away. Hearing a familiar voice, the young man didn't care about it and blurted out, "Senior Brother!"

Seeing Lian Qin holding his xun, Duan Yuan let out a sound and walked forward to retrieve it. "Senior Brother, woo woo… Quickly, give me back the xun. I need to get that tear demon…. Woo woo woo!"

He really couldn't control himself. His tears had nearly run dry, and his eyes were swollen into walnuts. He couldn't help but cry

Lian Qin frowned and returned the xun to him. Duan Yuan took the xun back and went to catch the slippery water ball.

The water ball sensed that the situation wasn't too promising. It rolled all over, spreading its damp breath. Shen Zhixian felt his eyes starting to get slightly sour, as if he was on the brink of tears. He set his mind and isolated the tear demon's breath with a spell—This water ball was the tear demon.

As its name implies, tear demons can exude a strange breath that can cause people who have low-cultivation or people who are careless to cry until the body's water becomes drained, resulting in death. At which point, the tear demon would then approach and eat the person.

The water ball ended up rolling too close to Lian Qin’s feet and so Lian Qin raised his guqin and pulverized it.

The water ball screeched and turned into a puddle of water, its wet breath suddenly dissipating. Seeing that it was finally resolved, Duan Yuan let out a sigh of relief and finally spoke normally, “Finally, it’s over…”

Since he’d accidentally fallen into the tear demon’s trap yesterday, he couldn’t stop crying. He’d only seen this kind of tear demon in books and didn’t know much about it. He only knew that if he fell into its trap, he would shed tears. Only by killing the tear demon could he resolve it.

However, the tear demon was very slippery, and this place was too strange. While Duan Yuan chased the tear demon, he must also pay attention to whether there were other dangers around him. After chasing for most of the day, his eyes were swollen and he still wasn't able to catch up.

Fortunately, he met his senior brother… Wait, why was senior brother in this place?

Duan Yuan, who wasn’t good at healing spells, rubbed his eyes. He could only look hard at Lian Qin with two walnut eyes. “Senior Brother…”

Finally, he also saw Shen Zhixian and the others.

Duan Yuan had seen Xue Ci before and recognized him as the master of Yao Sect. He quickly paid his respect, then turned his gaze to Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin but didn’t recognize them.

Of course, he knew that Qingyun Sect had changed hands. But, he’d gone out to gain practical experience and was only focused on cutting down monsters and removing demons. He hadn’t paid much attention to who the new sect leader was.

Lian Qin’s tone of voice sounded as if he’d never cried. He briefly introduced them to each other. Duan Yuan paid his respect to them and politely greeted them.

Xue Ci was much older than them and so it wasn't a problem to call him a senior. However, Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin couldn't receive this title and each moved sideways to avoid his half-courtesy.

Shen Zhixian said, "No need to be polite." While, at the same time, he wordlessly shot Lian Qin a glance.

It was understandable for Duan Yuan to be influenced by the tear demon, but Lian Qin's cultivation was equivalent to theirs. How was it that the tear demon hadn't even arrived yet and he was already shedding tears?

Was it because their disciple relationship was so profound that they could sense each other?

Lian Qin had only shed tears for a moment, but his eyes were still slightly red. But, because of the dim light and Duan Yuan's own eye discomfort, Duan Yuan couldn't see them clearly. He only hoarsely called out, "Senior Brother,"

Upon suddenly seeing his senior brother, Duan Yuan was extremely happy. But now, his happiness retreated and he stood somewhat ill at eased. His shifted the xun uneasily in his hands, seeming very nervous. However, as he faced Lian Qin, he position was still very respectful.

Lian Qin's body exuded an imposing and cold aura. He asked coolly, "Why are you here?"

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xun - a globular flute

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 76

“I, I…” Duan Yuan stuttered, but even after stuttering for a long time, nothing came out.

He really wanted to say, “If Senior Brother can come here, then why can’t I?” But, when he met Lian Qin’s eyes, Duan Yuan became terrified. “I just randomly walked in, no, carefully came in…”

Lian Qin seemed to want to hit him with the guqin. But, in the end, he held back. His usually calm voice was filled with anger as he said, “How many times have I told you to weigh your abilities and act accordingly. Don’t be rash and do anything risky…”

Lian Qin couldn’t imagine what would have happened if they hadn’t come in today. If even the tear demon could trap Duan Yuan, then he feared that, in the end, no one would even know that Duan Yuan’s bones laid here!

He shouldn’t have allowed him to go out and gain experience alone!

“I know, I know. I’ve grown up. I know it myself.” Duan Yuan muttered quietly, “Master was rest assured enough to let me leave…”

Lian Qin realized that he’d spoken the last half of his heart. He pursed his lips, seemed as if he wanted to say something, then paused again. After a while, he said softly, “Forget it. Just follow along.”

He apologized a bit to Shen Zhixian and the others. “My unruly junior brother was confused and entered the secret realm. Please excuse him.”

Xue Ci naturally laughed and said, “No harm.” Afterward, he brought out a few pieces of medicinal pellets and handed them to Duan Yuan for his eyes.

Duan Yuan hung his xun at his waist and happily thanked him. He took the pellets, crushed them, and applied the powder on his eyelids. The medicine from Yao Sect was naturally high quality, and the medicine’s effect was extremely fast. The moment he put it on, he felt a cooling sensation and his discomforts began ease by a lot. It was just a little itchy.

Duan Yuan wanted to rub his eyes but Lian Qin came over and shoved the guqin into his arms.

Duan Yuan was caught off guard. He hurriedly hugged the guqin, but before he could speak, he felt warm fingers gently pressing against his eyelids. Lian Qin’s cold voice sounded, “Close your eyes.”

“Mmn.” Duan Yuan didn't dare rebel against Lian Qin’s words. He closed his eyes obediently and slightly tilted up his head for Lian Qin to rub his eyes for him.

Gentle spiritual power passed from Lian Qin’s fingertips, rubbing into the skin.

The cold feeling dissipated, replaced by a slight heat. He didn't know if it was because of the drug’s effect or if it was due to the temperature of Lian Qin’s fingertips.

Since everyone was waiting, Lian Qin didn’t rub for too long. Seeing that the swelling was almost gone, he retracted his hand.

Duan Yuan blinked and whispered, “Thank you, Senior Brother.”

Lian Qin didn’t respond to him. He merely took the guqin back and coldly turned his head away.

Duan Yuan seemed to be accustomed to Lian Qin’s indifferent attitude toward him. He merely walked obediently. Shen Zhixian was next to him

and took the opportunity to quietly look him over.

The youth they'd met two to three years ago had now grown into a sturdy young man. But, his true temperament hadn't changed much and his eyes were still bright and clear. It seemed that he'd practice well in these past few years.

Duan Yuan noticed Shen Zhixian's gaze and turned his head to look at him, revealing a slightly shy grin.

He didn't recognize Shen Zhixian. But looking at Shen Zhixian, he couldn't help but think of Sui Xian, whom he'd happened to meet a long time ago.

Their appearances were different, but they had the same pleasing temperament. Sui Xian was more easing-going and unrestrained, while Shen Zhixian seemed to be more noble. They were obviously two very different people, but he couldn't help but associate them with one another.

Duan Yuan felt he was being offensive for having such a thought. Embarrassed, he smiled at Shen Zhixian again.

With this smile, he suddenly saw that Yan Jin, who was said to be from a hidden clan in Mingzhou, was looking at him.

The man's facial expression was emotionless, cold and indifferent. Even his gaze had a vague dislike.

Duan Yuan, "....."

This gaze was too familiar. Everytime he spoke to Big Brother Sui, he would be stared at like this by Big Brother Yan...

Duan Yuan quickly retracted his gaze and quietly stepped closer to Lian Qin, which gave him a slightly stronger sense of security.

Although his senior brother was cold to him and didn't always like him, he was still his own senior brother.

Duan Yuan seemed to have been here for a while but, when asked, he was still a little at a loss. “I followed a demon in here, probably three or four days ago?”

He wasn’t quite sure. In here, illusion and reality were intertwined, making it difficult to distinguish the passage of time. As a result, he could only roughly calculate based on his energy consumption.

“I’ve been here these past few days and, no matter which door I took or what I’d experienced on the path, I would end up back here in the end,” Duan Yuan said. “Each path was different. Sometimes, you’ll encounter things you fear. Sometimes, you’ll be chased by monsters.”

Shen Zhixian abruptly asked, “What were you afraid of?”

Duan Yuan subconsciously responded, “I broke Senior Brother’s strings, and he chased me…”

He’d already spoken half of it before he realized what he’d said. He stopped, scratched his head in embarrassment, and looked at Lian Qin. He seemed to see a trace of helplessness in Lian Qin’s eyes.

Could it be that, when he was young, he broke Senior Brother’s strings and so that was why Senior Brother no longer liked him?

Duan Yuan couldn’t help but think a little bit. At that time, he was raised as a girl in the sect. Lian Qin was the only disciple beside Master who knew about his male body. He couldn’t get too closed to the sisters nor be unbridled with the brothers--Only Lian Qin.

He could only get close to Lian Qin. Lian Qin already knew his identity so they got along well without any worries.

It was truly a pity that after he broke Senior Brother’s strings, Senior Brother began to treat him coldly as if, gradually, he liked him less and less.

“... Have you ever pushed open the door at the end of the path?”

Duan Yuan’s confused thoughts were interrupted. He said, “Pushed open.”

“Were you able to go inside and take a look?”

“I’ve gone in.”

Lian Qin glanced at him and motioned for him to continue speaking.

Duan Yuan said, “It was very difficult to walk through that door. It wasn’t that there was a monster blocking it. But the closer you get to the door, the less you want to go in. It’s hard to explain. You don’t want to go in and would feel a strong urge to return. I abandoned the idea many times. But, you just need to be determined and take that first step.”

After entering the door, the overwhelming sensation of wanting to turn back dissipated by more than half. As Duan Yuan forced one foot in front of the other, he found himself in a kind of spring paradise.

There was the sound of birds and insects. The plants and trees were green and lush. Flowers bloomed wildly. Just like a beautiful spring scenery.

It felt like an illusion but, if you reached out, you could touch every branch and every flower.

They felt real, and they surged with vitality.

It was just that, in there, time seemed to pass very quickly. Duan Yuan only took a few steps when the flowers began to fade, the vegetation withered, and the surrounding colors gradually changed from warm nature to cold white—it was snowing.

Snowflakes and the cold wind was enough to freeze bones. Even though Duan Yuan was protecting himself with spiritual power, he was chilled to bones and his teeth chattered. He cautiously took a few more steps and suddenly saw a dividing line not far away.

This side of the line was Winter but the other side was obscure, vague, and unclear.

Duan Yuan instinctively felt that there were many mysteries on that side. Even if this was a fantasy and only the world outside was real… He was determined to pass that boundary.

But, the further he went, the colder the wind became. The ice and snow fell on him, creating a barrier of cold pain on his body. After struggling for a while, Duan Yuan was finally exhausted. He couldn’t continue and could only allow himself to be involuntarily pushed back by the snow and wind.

“Then, I was pushed back, back, and back here again.” Duan Yuan spread his hands helplessly.

Seven doors, all evenly spaced.

They split apart and pushed the remaining three doors open, revealing almost exactly the same three paths.

Shen Zhixian said in a heavy voice, “There seems to be no other choice besides these paths. So let's choose a path?"

Lian Qin asked, “Separate or together?”

Among them, Xue Ci was the oldest and most experienced. As a result, everyone looked over at him. Xue Ci stroked his chin. “Together. Let’s be mindful of Little Duan’s words. We may have to work together and rush through. But, in case we should get separated, let’s return here to discuss again.”

A preliminary agreement was reached, and then it became a question of which door to choose.

Each door looked the same. Duan Yuan couldn’t remember which door he’d gone through before so everyone simply picked one door and entered.

This time, they were psychologically prepared so there was no accident. However, when they went through the second stone door, they didn’t see a lush Spring landscape as Duan Yuan had described, but a barren mountain with yellow trees.

The bones of demon beasts were scattered everywhere, many of which were piled under trees, white and ghastly.

Duan Yuan let out a sound of surprise and instinctively went over to take a closer look. However, Lian Qin blocked his path.

Lian Qin’s expression was tense, intermixed with a trace of forbearance and protectiveness. Although he looked calm, as if he didn’t care much about Duan Yuan, if one were to look closely, one could see that most of his attention was focused on Duan Yuan himself.

With so many people here, he was still so careful with Duan Yuan.

As if Duan Yuan was a fragile, porcelain doll.

However, everyone only thought that he was nervous about his junior brother and so they didn’t think much about his behavior. They only slowly moved forward and carefully studied their surroundings.

If Duan Yuan had seen a winter scene previously, then what they saw this time should be late Autumn, bleak and desolate.

Shen Zhixian released the grass bud, which twirled around and then flew back in disgust. It stood firmly on Shen Zhixian’s shoulder, chirping and shaking its leaves.

Shen Zhixian said in a low voice, “These plants are real, but their vitality is faint and fading away…” A cool breeze drifted passed, shaking his hem, and he lifted his eyes up to look at the sky. “It’s dark.”

It was indeed dark.

Large, black clouds drifted over the horizon, hanging low and heavy over everyone’s head. It casted vast shadows over the the land, hiding unknown numbers of demons and monsters. Suddenly, there came a thunderous roar. The clouds dispersed as many objects shot through them and began falling down.

Semi-transparent shadow demons, glutinous fiends, and many demons that they’d seen before, such as the tear demons, all gleefully leaped down from the dark clouds.

The dark clouds dispersed, turning this place into a playground for demons and monsters.

The shadow demons played hide and seek in the piles of bones; glutinous fiends gathered bones to gnaw; while tear demon balls bounced every which way, knocking against one another and making rumbling and grumbling noises. However, one tear demon wasn’t careful and accidentally slammed into a headless demon.

The headless demon’s skeleton was disjointed and disorganized, and there was nothing above the neck. After the tear demon collided with it, it reeled about stiffly, creaking and crunching, before turning around angrily.

The tear demon noticed that things were not good. It quickly jumped back and bounced away. However, even though the headless demon looked very stiff when it turned around, its movement was very fast as it caught the tear demon and, in an even faster move, crushed it completely.

Water dripped to the ground and quickly melted into the soil.

This scene was really disturbing.

Duan Yuan picked up a dead branch and shook it in front of a shadow demon. The shadow demon didn’t seem to hear or notice him. Instead, it stuck its head into a pile of bones, causing its buttocks to lift, wobbling.

Duan Yuan tried to poke at it’s butt with the branch, but it only caused the image in front of them to sway, emitting a circle of ripples. The dead branch did not touch the shadow demon; there was a transparent barrier separating them from the demons and monsters outside.

Duan Yuan threw away the dead branch and withdrew his hand. He rubbed his nose. “I can’t touch it.”

Shen Zhixian looked back and saw that the stone door that they’d come through had disappeared. Behind them was only a silent, yellow mountain that was also covered with various demons and monsters.

In the distance, the rising moon shone hazily.

Yan Jin stooped down, picked up a fist-sized stone, and threw it gently.

His throw seemed casual but, as the stone flew out, it suddenly broke into dozens of pieces of rocks that scattered in all directions.

The scenes surrounding them were soon covered with numerous ripples. But, after a while, it inevitably returned to normal. The demons and monsters on the other side of the barrier didn’t seem to notice them nor hear them. However, Shen Zhixian could see clearly that they were enclosed in a barrier.

Unless they break the barrier, they would be trapped here, unable to leave. However, if they should break this barrier, they would soon be swarmed by demons and monsters.

This seemed like a dilemma. However, everyone smiled unanimously; they came here to destroy these demons and monsters, after all.

The outside world didn’t know what this secret realm was and Frost Return sword spirit could not pin the secret realm down for long. They had to make a quick decision.

However, there were still many demons and monsters outside. They need to

find a way to break the barrier quietly so as to be able to sneak an attack on them.

The barrier wasn't difficult to break; the problem was how to break it silently.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin's weapons were swords; Xue Ci's weapon was a medicinal pestle; Lian Qin's weapon was a…cudgel guqin; and, Duan Yuan's weapon was a...xun that was maybe also used to smash things.

It really seemed to be earth-shattering.

Duan Yuan held the xun in his hand and eagerly said, "I can try to shatter the barrier with a xun note."

Seeing that there was no objections from anyone, he put the xun to his lips and took a breath.

A deep, low note rose up, the sound slightly desolate. Duan Yuan's robe fluttered with wind, the image both haunting and stirring. Spiritual power spread out, carried forth by the mournful note. It was unexpectedly extraordinary.

Shen Zhixian had only been able to listen to Duan Yuan's music once, which was the requiem Duan Yuan had played for the kitchen ghost.

The resurrection song had been gentle and peaceful, carrying no trace of lethality. Recently, after watching Lian Qin use his guqin as a cudgel and Duan Yuan using his xun to smash objects, he'd forgotten how entrancing their music could be. Instruments was used by sound cultivators to create music. Music could also be lethal.

Silent scratches appeared on the barrier, and scenes of the demons and monsters outside seemed to be fragmenting.

Everyone was ready. Once the barrier was broken, they would immediately shoot forward and quickly attack those demons and monsters outside with

the fastest and fiercest moves.

Lian Qin's brows moved slightly, his heart suddenly tremoring with an unknown feeling. He leaned back against Duan Yuan and held the guqin with one hand while sliding his other hand over the guqin's body. Five icy silk strings emerged, formed by spiritual force. He pressed gently on one of the strings, causing it to tremble.

There were now more and more scratches on the barrier and the sounds of the demons and monsters outside were growing louder and louder. In the noise, there was a slight sound, like lightly floating ice and thick snow melting.

Sound cultivators were very sensitive to sounds. Lian Qin concentrated all his attention and heard an unknown sound. His expression changed, and he yelled, "Duan Yuan, stop!"

He suddenly made a move, as if to snatch Duan Yuan's xun. It was most forbidden to rob a sound cultivator of their musical instruments when they were in the middle of playing it. The result could range from minor to severe injuries. Even Lian Qin, himself, wouldn't be able to easily handle it, much less Duan Yuan!

But, he was still one step too late. Duan Yuan blew the last note. The sound of shifting ice and snow suddenly rang out, loud and clear. The moment Duan Yuan unfocused, he felt a cold surge at his feet, followed by a slight vibration.

Almost immediately, everybody dropped. The soil that had been covered with dry grass and frozen over with a thin layer of ice could no longer bear everyone's weight. It suddenly shattered, exposing the huge pit underneath.

Heavy snow fell from the sky, and countless ice cones as thick as an arm bore down from all directions.

The ice cones' tips brimmed with murderous chill, twined with rays of devil qi and shooting down as if wanting to poke everyone into hedgehogs.

Shen Zhixian pulled out his sword to block an ice cone. He stood back to back with Yan Jin, his sword dancing lightly in front of him as he cut off countless ice cones.

The surrounding ice wall seemed to rise up rapidly as a huge pressure dropped from the sky and pressed them down toward the bottom of the pit. They could only be cautious and careful, standing on the ice cones with the top cut off. Although they couldn't completely overcome the pressure, they could at least slow the momentum of their fall.

Meanwhile, there were too many ice cones, shooting at them fiercely and endlessly. They were scattered apart, with Shen Zhixian and Yan jin on one side, Xue Ci on one side, and Lian Qin and Duan Yuan on the other side.

Lian Qin's face was colder than the snow and ice. As his lips pressed tightly together, his fingers flicked over the strings. The sound of the guqin turned into an invisible force that broke the ice cone barreling straight toward him and Duan Yuan.

Perhaps, the secret realm sensed that Duan Yuan was the person who broke the barrier and deliberately retaliated against him. Camouflaged amidst the falling white snow, countless small ice cones gathered together into a particularly thick and large ice cone. It shot toward Duan Yuan.

Duan Yuan was worn out from the efforts used to break the barrier. Although he could still protect himself, it was limited and his movements had a trace of sluggishness, making it difficult for him to retreat.

Just as Duan Yuan thought he would soon be half dead and was preparing to defend against it, Lian Qin saw the cone. He instinctively kicked Duan Yuan away with one foot. Lifting his guqin up toward his face, his five fingers flit across the strings, sending out a burst of majestic spiritual force that collided with the large ice cone.

A harsh sound ricocheted out as the spiritual force slammed into the large ice cone. But, the large ice cone was condensed specifically to target Duan

Yuan. How could it be so easy to resist? Duan Yuan staggered sideways but immediately reacted after straightening. He put the xun to his lips and blew, resisting with Lian Qin.

The large ice cone couldn’t resist their combined forces and quickly broke into many small cone fragments. However, it seemed unwilling to be repelled by their spiritual powers.

Duan Yuan felt a force slammed into his chest, making it feel tight and painful. His vision swam, but he still managed to smash away the ice cone fragments by sheer instinct. With difficulty, he opened his eyes.

He saw that there was only one cone fragment left. During this time, Lian Qin was fully resisting against the rebounding spiritual force and had no time to pay attention to it. The remaining cone fragment ruthlessly pierced his chest!

Blood instantly spurted out, staining Duan Yuan’s eyes. He was so scared, he felt as if he would lose his soul. Tossing away his xun, not caring about his own hurting chest, he rushed toward Lian Qin.

Countless ice cones shot by but he didn’t bother resisting them. His only thought was on trying to save Lian Qin.

Lian Qin’s forehead was dotted with a cold sweat. Panting, he reached out, wrapped his fingers around the ice cone half-embedded in his chest, and yanked it out decisively and unhesitantly.

Immediately after, he crushed the ice cone fragment with his last strength.

The wind and snow suddenly melted away and the small ice cones in the air immediately lost their momentum and turned into cold rainwater.

After Lian Qin crushed the ice cone, he staggered weakly and was caught by Duan Yuan.

Duan Yuan also looked very pitiful. His clothes were stained red with blood

that belonged to both himself and Lian Qin.

Eyes wide, he staggered under Lian Qin’s weight and shouted hoarsely, “Senior Brother!”

Lian Qin’s face was pale, his eyes half-close. He panted and suddenly spit out a mouthful of blood.

A piece of jade fell from his chest and broke into two halves.

Translator Xixi:
I just realized there are only 3 more chapters left, followed by 3 extras.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 76

“I, I…” Duan Yuan stuttered, but even after stuttering for a long time, nothing came out.

He really wanted to say, “If Senior Brother can come here, then why can’t I?” But, when he met Lian Qin’s eyes, Duan Yuan became terrified. “I just randomly walked in, no, carefully came in…”

Lian Qin seemed to want to hit him with the guqin. But, in the end, he held back. His usually calm voice was filled with anger as he said, “How many times have I told you to weigh your abilities and act accordingly. Don’t be rash and do anything risky…”

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He shouldn’t have allowed him to go out and gain experience alone!

“I know, I know. I’ve grown up. I know it myself.” Duan Yuan muttered quietly, “Master was rest assured enough to let me leave…”

Lian Qin realized that he’d spoken the last half of his heart. He pursed his lips, seemed as if he wanted to say something, then paused again. After a while, he said softly, “Forget it. Just follow along.”

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“... Have you ever pushed open the door at the end of the path?”

Duan Yuan’s confused thoughts were interrupted. He said, “Pushed open.”

“Were you able to go inside and take a look?”

“I’ve gone in.”

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Duan Yuan said, “It was very difficult to walk through that door. It wasn’t that there was a monster blocking it. But the closer you get to the door, the less you want to go in. It’s hard to explain. You don’t want to go in and would feel a strong urge to return. I abandoned the idea many times. But, you just need to be determined and take that first step.”

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The bones of demon beasts were scattered everywhere, many of which were piled under trees, white and ghastly.

Duan Yuan let out a sound of surprise and instinctively went over to take a closer look. However, Lian Qin blocked his path.

Lian Qin’s expression was tense, intermixed with a trace of forbearance and protectiveness. Although he looked calm, as if he didn’t care much about Duan Yuan, if one were to look closely, one could see that most of his attention was focused on Duan Yuan himself.

With so many people here, he was still so careful with Duan Yuan.

As if Duan Yuan was a fragile, porcelain doll.

However, everyone only thought that he was nervous about his junior brother and so they didn’t think much about his behavior. They only slowly moved forward and carefully studied their surroundings.

If Duan Yuan had seen a winter scene previously, then what they saw this time should be late Autumn, bleak and desolate.

Shen Zhixian released the grass bud, which twirled around and then flew back in disgust. It stood firmly on Shen Zhixian’s shoulder, chirping and shaking its leaves.

Shen Zhixian said in a low voice, “These plants are real, but their vitality is faint and fading away…” A cool breeze drifted passed, shaking his hem, and he lifted his eyes up to look at the sky. “It’s dark.”

It was indeed dark.

Large, black clouds drifted over the horizon, hanging low and heavy over everyone’s head. It casted vast shadows over the the land, hiding unknown numbers of demons and monsters. Suddenly, there came a thunderous roar. The clouds dispersed as many objects shot through them and began falling down.

Semi-transparent shadow demons, glutinous fiends, and many demons that they’d seen before, such as the tear demons, all gleefully leaped down from the dark clouds.

The dark clouds dispersed, turning this place into a playground for demons and monsters.

The shadow demons played hide and seek in the piles of bones; glutinous fiends gathered bones to gnaw; while tear demon balls bounced every which way, knocking against one another and making rumbling and grumbling noises. However, one tear demon wasn’t careful and accidentally slammed into a headless demon.

The headless demon’s skeleton was disjointed and disorganized, and there was nothing above the neck. After the tear demon collided with it, it reeled about stiffly, creaking and crunching, before turning around angrily.

The tear demon noticed that things were not good. It quickly jumped back and bounced away. However, even though the headless demon looked very stiff when it turned around, its movement was very fast as it caught the tear demon and, in an even faster move, crushed it completely.

Water dripped to the ground and quickly melted into the soil.

This scene was really disturbing.

Duan Yuan picked up a dead branch and shook it in front of a shadow demon. The shadow demon didn’t seem to hear or notice him. Instead, it stuck its head into a pile of bones, causing its buttocks to lift, wobbling.

Duan Yuan tried to poke at it’s butt with the branch, but it only caused the image in front of them to sway, emitting a circle of ripples. The dead branch did not touch the shadow demon; there was a transparent barrier separating them from the demons and monsters outside.

Duan Yuan threw away the dead branch and withdrew his hand. He rubbed his nose. “I can’t touch it.”

Shen Zhixian looked back and saw that the stone door that they’d come through had disappeared. Behind them was only a silent, yellow mountain that was also covered with various demons and monsters.

In the distance, the rising moon shone hazily.

Yan Jin stooped down, picked up a fist-sized stone, and threw it gently.

His throw seemed casual but, as the stone flew out, it suddenly broke into dozens of pieces of rocks that scattered in all directions.

The scenes surrounding them were soon covered with numerous ripples. But, after a while, it inevitably returned to normal. The demons and monsters on the other side of the barrier didn’t seem to notice them nor hear them. However, Shen Zhixian could see clearly that they were enclosed in a barrier.

Unless they break the barrier, they would be trapped here, unable to leave. However, if they should break this barrier, they would soon be swarmed by demons and monsters.

This seemed like a dilemma. However, everyone smiled unanimously; they came here to destroy these demons and monsters, after all.

The outside world didn’t know what this secret realm was and Frost Return sword spirit could not pin the secret realm down for long. They had to make a quick decision.

However, there were still many demons and monsters outside. They need to

find a way to break the barrier quietly so as to be able to sneak an attack on them.

The barrier wasn't difficult to break; the problem was how to break it silently.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin's weapons were swords; Xue Ci's weapon was a medicinal pestle; Lian Qin's weapon was a…cudgel guqin; and, Duan Yuan's weapon was a...xun that was maybe also used to smash things.

It really seemed to be earth-shattering.

Duan Yuan held the xun in his hand and eagerly said, "I can try to shatter the barrier with a xun note."

Seeing that there was no objections from anyone, he put the xun to his lips and took a breath.

A deep, low note rose up, the sound slightly desolate. Duan Yuan's robe fluttered with wind, the image both haunting and stirring. Spiritual power spread out, carried forth by the mournful note. It was unexpectedly extraordinary.

Shen Zhixian had only been able to listen to Duan Yuan's music once, which was the requiem Duan Yuan had played for the kitchen ghost.

The resurrection song had been gentle and peaceful, carrying no trace of lethality. Recently, after watching Lian Qin use his guqin as a cudgel and Duan Yuan using his xun to smash objects, he'd forgotten how entrancing their music could be. Instruments was used by sound cultivators to create music. Music could also be lethal.

Silent scratches appeared on the barrier, and scenes of the demons and monsters outside seemed to be fragmenting.

Everyone was ready. Once the barrier was broken, they would immediately shoot forward and quickly attack those demons and monsters outside with

the fastest and fiercest moves.

Lian Qin's brows moved slightly, his heart suddenly tremoring with an unknown feeling. He leaned back against Duan Yuan and held the guqin with one hand while sliding his other hand over the guqin's body. Five icy silk strings emerged, formed by spiritual force. He pressed gently on one of the strings, causing it to tremble.

There were now more and more scratches on the barrier and the sounds of the demons and monsters outside were growing louder and louder. In the noise, there was a slight sound, like lightly floating ice and thick snow melting.

Sound cultivators were very sensitive to sounds. Lian Qin concentrated all his attention and heard an unknown sound. His expression changed, and he yelled, "Duan Yuan, stop!"

He suddenly made a move, as if to snatch Duan Yuan's xun. It was most forbidden to rob a sound cultivator of their musical instruments when they were in the middle of playing it. The result could range from minor to severe injuries. Even Lian Qin, himself, wouldn't be able to easily handle it, much less Duan Yuan!

But, he was still one step too late. Duan Yuan blew the last note. The sound of shifting ice and snow suddenly rang out, loud and clear. The moment Duan Yuan unfocused, he felt a cold surge at his feet, followed by a slight vibration.

Almost immediately, everybody dropped. The soil that had been covered with dry grass and frozen over with a thin layer of ice could no longer bear everyone's weight. It suddenly shattered, exposing the huge pit underneath.

Heavy snow fell from the sky, and countless ice cones as thick as an arm bore down from all directions.

The ice cones' tips brimmed with murderous chill, twined with rays of devil qi and shooting down as if wanting to poke everyone into hedgehogs.

Shen Zhixian pulled out his sword to block an ice cone. He stood back to back with Yan Jin, his sword dancing lightly in front of him as he cut off countless ice cones.

The surrounding ice wall seemed to rise up rapidly as a huge pressure dropped from the sky and pressed them down toward the bottom of the pit. They could only be cautious and careful, standing on the ice cones with the top cut off. Although they couldn't completely overcome the pressure, they could at least slow the momentum of their fall.

Meanwhile, there were too many ice cones, shooting at them fiercely and endlessly. They were scattered apart, with Shen Zhixian and Yan jin on one side, Xue Ci on one side, and Lian Qin and Duan Yuan on the other side.

Lian Qin's face was colder than the snow and ice. As his lips pressed tightly together, his fingers flicked over the strings. The sound of the guqin turned into an invisible force that broke the ice cone barreling straight toward him and Duan Yuan.

Perhaps, the secret realm sensed that Duan Yuan was the person who broke the barrier and deliberately retaliated against him. Camouflaged amidst the falling white snow, countless small ice cones gathered together into a particularly thick and large ice cone. It shot toward Duan Yuan.

Duan Yuan was worn out from the efforts used to break the barrier. Although he could still protect himself, it was limited and his movements had a trace of sluggishness, making it difficult for him to retreat.

Just as Duan Yuan thought he would soon be half dead and was preparing to defend against it, Lian Qin saw the cone. He instinctively kicked Duan Yuan away with one foot. Lifting his guqin up toward his face, his five fingers flit across the strings, sending out a burst of majestic spiritual force that collided with the large ice cone.

A harsh sound ricocheted out as the spiritual force slammed into the large ice cone. But, the large ice cone was condensed specifically to target Duan

Yuan. How could it be so easy to resist? Duan Yuan staggered sideways but immediately reacted after straightening. He put the xun to his lips and blew, resisting with Lian Qin.

The large ice cone couldn’t resist their combined forces and quickly broke into many small cone fragments. However, it seemed unwilling to be repelled by their spiritual powers.

Duan Yuan felt a force slammed into his chest, making it feel tight and painful. His vision swam, but he still managed to smash away the ice cone fragments by sheer instinct. With difficulty, he opened his eyes.

He saw that there was only one cone fragment left. During this time, Lian Qin was fully resisting against the rebounding spiritual force and had no time to pay attention to it. The remaining cone fragment ruthlessly pierced his chest!

Blood instantly spurted out, staining Duan Yuan’s eyes. He was so scared, he felt as if he would lose his soul. Tossing away his xun, not caring about his own hurting chest, he rushed toward Lian Qin.

Countless ice cones shot by but he didn’t bother resisting them. His only thought was on trying to save Lian Qin.

Lian Qin’s forehead was dotted with a cold sweat. Panting, he reached out, wrapped his fingers around the ice cone half-embedded in his chest, and yanked it out decisively and unhesitantly.

Immediately after, he crushed the ice cone fragment with his last strength.

The wind and snow suddenly melted away and the small ice cones in the air immediately lost their momentum and turned into cold rainwater.

After Lian Qin crushed the ice cone, he staggered weakly and was caught by Duan Yuan.

Duan Yuan also looked very pitiful. His clothes were stained red with blood

that belonged to both himself and Lian Qin.

Eyes wide, he staggered under Lian Qin’s weight and shouted hoarsely, “Senior Brother!”

Lian Qin’s face was pale, his eyes half-close. He panted and suddenly spit out a mouthful of blood.

A piece of jade fell from his chest and broke into two halves.

Translator Xixi:
I just realized there are only 3 more chapters left, followed by 3 extras.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 77

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He placed a trembling hand over the bloody hole on Lian Qin’s chest. He was so panicked and anxious that he couldn’t think of how he should place his hand. He only knew that when he lightly pressed his hand on Lian Qin’s chest, Lian Qin’s brows furrowed in pain and more blood gushed out.

"Senior Brother! Senior Brother!"

Duan Yuan was so scared that he dared not move. He covered Lian Qin’s chest with his hand, feeling a faint heartbeat. His face was pale with panic, as if he was the one who was seriously injured instead. Feeling that Lian Qin was dying, Duan Yuan frantically tried to transfer spiritual qi to Lian Qin, hoping to protect his heart.

Lian Win was the master’s personal inheriting disciple and was cultivated from an early age.

When Duan Yuan was a child, he was too naughty and shamelessly refused to diligently practice. Master would always poke him in the head, hating iron for not becoming steel. “Why don’t you go and look at your senior brother? He is already very talented and everyday, he would get up early to diligently practice, without slacking the slightest bit. Unlike you.”

Jabbing his forehead a with callus fingertip, poking out his dissatisfaction.

Duan Yuan once hated Lian Qin because Master always praised him, until later…

Lian Qin coughed, the sound pulling Duan Yuan's thoughts back. Lips trembling, he called, "Senior Brother."

Xue Ci hurried over, pulled out a life-saving elixir, and let Duan Yuan feed it to Lian Qin.

Blood clotted Lian Qin's throat and he choked a few times before he managed to swallow down the pill.

Xue Ci checked his pulse, and his eyebrows slightly drew down.

Duan Yuan was originally full of hope but, seeing Xue Ci's expression turn so serious, he didn't dare to breathe and only looked at him with wide eyes.

Xue Ci withdrew his hand and was about to speak. But, suddenly he saw the two pieces of broken jade. Startled, he picked it up, and after carefully studying it, he hesitantly said, "Twin jade?"

Only then did Duan Yuan notice the jade. He let out a surprised sound and, supporting Lian Qin with one hand, he reached into his chest with his other hand.

A piece of jade identical to the broken jade was brought out.

Lian Qin had given him this piece of jade and told him that it was merely a warm spirit jade and would be beneficial to his cultivation. He'd worn it for many years, and it was very precious to him. But now, the jade body was full of cracks, as if a slight pressure would turn it into powder.

Xue Ci saw the cracked jade in his hand and thoughtfully murmured, "So it turned out to be like this…"

No wonder Lian Qin was so easily affected by the tear demon before. In

fact, it was not the tear demon that affected Lian Qin, but Duan Yuan who had affected him.

Duan Yuan was uncertain, and because he was so anxious, he didn’t dare to hurry Xue Ci. He only said, “Senior Xue, what does this mean…?”

Xue Ci weighted the broken jade in his hand. “This is the associated jade.”

He gestured with his chin to the broken jade in Duan Yuan's hand and said, “That is the original jade.”

This was a twin jade rarely seen in the world. It could only be found in an extremely hot volcano and, even then, the jade would need to condense for hundreds of years.

A large stone could produce two pieces of jade. The color of the original jade was typically pure black with a warm temperature. Next to the original jade would be a smaller jade with a slightly lighter color.

Because twin jades could only be produced in extremely hot places, the body would stay warm, just like warm spirit jade. However, this was not its rare point. The most amazing thing about it was not only because it was conscious but also because it has its own spirit patterns.

The spiritual qi of heaven and earth had engraved delicate lines on them and each line was full of spiritual qi. This was verified by many predecessors.

“Twin jade would only recognize one master and can resist from being stolen. Once it’s stolen, the jade would break.” Xue Ci said, “Looking at this broken jade, your life might have ended earlier. However, the owner of the companion jade absorbed most of the death blow, so...”

Xue Ci continued to talk, but Duan Yuan couldn’t hear it. His mind had gone blank. Only the sentences “life might have ended” and “absorbed most of the death blow” constantly circulated in his mind.

The ice cone had shot toward him, but senior brother kicked him away...

Lian Qin leaned back against him and let out a sluggish breath. He called out weakly, “Duan Yuan.”

His voice was very weak, but it immediately made Duan Yuan snap to attention.

Lian Qin’s eyes were half-closed, as if he barely had the strength to keep them open. His breathing slowed, and he said, “In a few days, you would have passed your twentieth birthday…”

Twenty!

A clap of thunder sounded in his mind and, from his memory, came his parents words, “Child, father and mother had no other choice. The master looked at your fate and told us to raise you as a daughter until you turn twenty years old. This is the only way to prevent your death…”

Duan Yuan thought that he’d become a man for too long, long enough for him to have forgotten why he went to Qianyin Pavilion in the first place. That fortune telling master had said that there was a chance he could be saved in the west. As a result, his parents took him all the way west and delivered him to Qianyin Pavilion.

“This birthday, Senior Brother may not be able to celebrate it with you…” Lian Qin closed his eyes, not once mentioning the twin jade nor Duan Yuan’s near death. He lifted his hand with difficulties and attempted to fix Duan Yuan’s messy collars. “Senior Brother was very fierce to you before. I just wanted you to practice seriously….Ahem, ahem!”

He coughed a few times, causing blood to spill from his lips. He said intermittently, “...I don’t hate you. Merely later...as long as you’re happy.”

Duan Yuan couldn’t stand it anymore. He let out a whimper and became choked with sobs. “Sorry, Senior Brother. I’m sorry… I’ll listen to you in the future. You have to be okay… Once we get out of this secret realm, I’ll return to the sect with you…”

Since he was a child, Lian Qin was burdened with heavy responsibilities. After learning about Duan Yuan's true identity, he actually wanted to cultivate Duan Yuan into becoming his second-in-command. But, due to various reasons, Duan Yuan refused to listen to him and chose to leave the sect to gain practical experience.

Duan Yuan was aware that he'd failed to live up to Lian Qin's expectations. He already had a guilty conscience, but because of today's event, it was infinitely magnified. Lian Qin must have known about his problem and went through so much trouble to protect him. But he….

Duan Yuan cried so much that he began to hiccup. He still hadn't recuperated from the injury caused by the ice cone's rebounded spiritual force. He'd also spent a large amount of spiritual energy on Lian Qin. He felt his chest become very tight, then he turned his head and vomited a mouthful of blood. He looked quite terrible and pitiful.

Lian Qin gasped and said, "Don't cry, I…."

Of the pair of disciple brothers, one was seriously wounded and the other was in tears, and both needed to communicate with each other sincerely. Xue Ci had already stepped back to Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin's side. He rubbed his chin suspiciously, "This is… the residual effect of the tear demon?"

Shen Zhixian looked at him with ease, knowing that Lian Qin had no major trouble, and smiled slightly. "The fellow disciples just have a good relationship."

It seemed like Lian Qin wanted to sit up on his own, but Duan Yuan was afraid he might further aggravate his injury and hugged him tighter, refusing to let him move.

Duan Yuan let out a whimper and said, "If I can go back to the sect with Senior Brother this time, I'll do whatever Senior Brother asks me to do. I won't refuse and won't complain… as long as Senior Brother is fine…"

Lian Qin was startled. He didn’t think Duan Yuan would say that. He hesitated for a moment and then asked, “... Really?”

Duan Yuan nodded eagerly. The movement seemed to have strained his internal injury, and he let out a cough. “Really, really!”

Lian Qin was relieved. “....Then that would be good.”

He finally heard what he wanted from Duan Yuan’s mouth and couldn’t help but smile. But, Duan Yuan saw his smile and misunderstood. His heart jerked with fear, and he hugged Lian Qin even tighter.

Lian Qin was hugged so tightly by him that his chest felt stuffy, as if he was about to gain some more internal injuries.

Although he was seriously injured, it wasn’t enough to kill him. But, the ice cone was indeed powerful. Even after taking Xue Ci’s elixir, it would still take a bit of time for him to fully recover. At the moment, he was so weak that he could barely push Duan Yuan back. “Let go.”

Duan Yuan thought that Lian Qin wouldn’t be able to hold on. He wept, eyes brimming with tears. Treating his senior brother’s words as if it was nonsense, he only hugged him tighter.

“Senior brother, it was all my fault before. I also won’t complain to Master about you anymore and won’t practice my swordplay only once in the morning and then sleep lazily under the tree. I also won’t sneak a turtle into your bed anymore. I’ve made a lot of mistakes...Wu wu wu… Senior Brother, I’m sorry. Don’t die. You need to be fine, okay?”

Lian Qin, “.....”

He finally couldn't stand it anymore.

His own body was clear to him. He wasn’t hurt to the point of dying. In fact, he just wanted to pressure Duan Yuan to consider returning. But, he

never expected that this little junior brother's brain would be filled with the vast ocean. In front of these outsiders, how could he shake out their old things and remark on them so unabashedly?!

Duan Yuan's mouth was covered by a pair of slightly warm hands, muffling his voice, and causing him to cry out.

A warm and wet breath sprayed onto Lian Qin's palm and he sighed, withdrew his hand, and insisted on sitting up. "I won't die. Don't cry. Your crying is giving me a headache."

Duan Yuan cried out "Ahh?" and let out a hiccup. He choked back the rest of his cries and looked at Lian Qin with teary eyes. As he blinked confusedly, a teardrop trembled on his long eyelashes and rolled down his cheek.

Immortal cultivators tend to have good constitution. After Lian Qin circulated his spiritual force, the elixir's effects began to kick in. The spiritual force that was almost frozen by the ice cone began to function normally. He moderated his breath and said, "I'm not made of tofu. How could it be so easy for me to die…"

Duan Yuan looked at him, stunned, and took a long time to respond. Finally, he carefully touched the wet blood on Lian Qin's chest. "Senior Brother, don't coax me… Are you really okay?"

Lian Qin only looked at him and asked, "You've sustained some internal injuries. Is it bad?"

After Duan Yuan shook his head, Lian Qin closed his eyes and began to meditate. Duan Yuan looked at him anxiously and then looked at Xue Ci. Xue Ci nodded at him. "As he said, although his injury is serious, he won't die. He would just need to be careful and adjust his breath for a while."

Duan Yuan felt as if a large stone had dislodged from his heart. His trembling hand finally calmed and, when he looked at the blood stains on Lian Qin's chest, he wanted to laugh and cry. "It's good. Senior Brother will

be okay… Hic!”

Fill with an equal mixture of great sorrow and joy, he bursted into tears and couldn’t stop. Afraid that he might disturb Lian Qin, he covered his mouth, not daring to make a sound, and causing his face to become slightly red.

Xue Ci looked amused, then he shook his head helplessly. He passed a medicinal pellet over. “You’ve just suffered an internal injury. You also need to adjust your breath for a minute or two.”

Now that there was no immediate danger, calm was restored. The two people sat and adjusted their breaths. Shen Zhixian was afraid there might be some unexpected incidents and didn’t walk too far from them as he looked around.

The ice pit was massive, making them look like tiny ants inside it. The surrounding ice wall was far away from them and, looking up, the top stretched very high.

Shen Zhixian looked up for a while and frowned. “Those things are looking down at us.”

After the barrier was broken, the demons and monsters saw them and swarmed over. Later, when they fell into the deep pit, the demons and monsters didn’t follow. Instead, they surrounded the ice pit at the top.

But, none of them came down.

Yan Jin had a deeper understanding of the monsters. He looked at them for a moment and said softly, “There are things down here that they’re afraid of.”

Xue Ci looked around. There was only ice and snow all around them. Aside from a foggy, pervading cold, there were no other living creatures. He didn’t find anything wrong so he jokingly said, “Could they be afraid of us?”

Shen Zhixian knew that Yan Jin wouldn’t joke around. He continued to look around, until, suddenly his expression shifted. He said, “No, look at the ice wall--”

By this point, the foggy cold air had dissipated somewhat, revealing the images on the ice wall.

Xue Ci sucked in a breath.

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Duan Yuan cried so much that he began to hiccup. He still hadn't recuperated from the injury caused by the ice cone's rebounded spiritual force. He'd also spent a large amount of spiritual energy on Lian Qin. He felt his chest become very tight, then he turned his head and vomited a mouthful of blood. He looked quite terrible and pitiful.

Lian Qin gasped and said, "Don't cry, I…."

Of the pair of disciple brothers, one was seriously wounded and the other was in tears, and both needed to communicate with each other sincerely. Xue Ci had already stepped back to Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin's side. He rubbed his chin suspiciously, "This is… the residual effect of the tear demon?"

Shen Zhixian looked at him with ease, knowing that Lian Qin had no major trouble, and smiled slightly. "The fellow disciples just have a good relationship."

It seemed like Lian Qin wanted to sit up on his own, but Duan Yuan was afraid he might further aggravate his injury and hugged him tighter, refusing to let him move.

Duan Yuan let out a whimper and said, "If I can go back to the sect with Senior Brother this time, I'll do whatever Senior Brother asks me to do. I won't refuse and won't complain… as long as Senior Brother is fine…"

Lian Qin was startled. He didn’t think Duan Yuan would say that. He hesitated for a moment and then asked, “... Really?”

Duan Yuan nodded eagerly. The movement seemed to have strained his internal injury, and he let out a cough. “Really, really!”

Lian Qin was relieved. “....Then that would be good.”

He finally heard what he wanted from Duan Yuan’s mouth and couldn’t help but smile. But, Duan Yuan saw his smile and misunderstood. His heart jerked with fear, and he hugged Lian Qin even tighter.

Lian Qin was hugged so tightly by him that his chest felt stuffy, as if he was about to gain some more internal injuries.

Although he was seriously injured, it wasn’t enough to kill him. But, the ice cone was indeed powerful. Even after taking Xue Ci’s elixir, it would still take a bit of time for him to fully recover. At the moment, he was so weak that he could barely push Duan Yuan back. “Let go.”

Duan Yuan thought that Lian Qin wouldn’t be able to hold on. He wept, eyes brimming with tears. Treating his senior brother’s words as if it was nonsense, he only hugged him tighter.

“Senior brother, it was all my fault before. I also won’t complain to Master about you anymore and won’t practice my swordplay only once in the morning and then sleep lazily under the tree. I also won’t sneak a turtle into your bed anymore. I’ve made a lot of mistakes...Wu wu wu… Senior Brother, I’m sorry. Don’t die. You need to be fine, okay?”

Lian Qin, “.....”

He finally couldn't stand it anymore.

His own body was clear to him. He wasn’t hurt to the point of dying. In fact, he just wanted to pressure Duan Yuan to consider returning. But, he

never expected that this little junior brother's brain would be filled with the vast ocean. In front of these outsiders, how could he shake out their old things and remark on them so unabashedly?!

Duan Yuan's mouth was covered by a pair of slightly warm hands, muffling his voice, and causing him to cry out.

A warm and wet breath sprayed onto Lian Qin's palm and he sighed, withdrew his hand, and insisted on sitting up. "I won't die. Don't cry. Your crying is giving me a headache."

Duan Yuan cried out "Ahh?" and let out a hiccup. He choked back the rest of his cries and looked at Lian Qin with teary eyes. As he blinked confusedly, a teardrop trembled on his long eyelashes and rolled down his cheek.

Immortal cultivators tend to have good constitution. After Lian Qin circulated his spiritual force, the elixir's effects began to kick in. The spiritual force that was almost frozen by the ice cone began to function normally. He moderated his breath and said, "I'm not made of tofu. How could it be so easy for me to die…"

Duan Yuan looked at him, stunned, and took a long time to respond. Finally, he carefully touched the wet blood on Lian Qin's chest. "Senior Brother, don't coax me… Are you really okay?"

Lian Qin only looked at him and asked, "You've sustained some internal injuries. Is it bad?"

After Duan Yuan shook his head, Lian Qin closed his eyes and began to meditate. Duan Yuan looked at him anxiously and then looked at Xue Ci. Xue Ci nodded at him. "As he said, although his injury is serious, he won't die. He would just need to be careful and adjust his breath for a while."

Duan Yuan felt as if a large stone had dislodged from his heart. His trembling hand finally calmed and, when he looked at the blood stains on Lian Qin's chest, he wanted to laugh and cry. "It's good. Senior Brother will

be okay… Hic!”

Fill with an equal mixture of great sorrow and joy, he bursted into tears and couldn’t stop. Afraid that he might disturb Lian Qin, he covered his mouth, not daring to make a sound, and causing his face to become slightly red.

Xue Ci looked amused, then he shook his head helplessly. He passed a medicinal pellet over. “You’ve just suffered an internal injury. You also need to adjust your breath for a minute or two.”

Now that there was no immediate danger, calm was restored. The two people sat and adjusted their breaths. Shen Zhixian was afraid there might be some unexpected incidents and didn’t walk too far from them as he looked around.

The ice pit was massive, making them look like tiny ants inside it. The surrounding ice wall was far away from them and, looking up, the top stretched very high.

Shen Zhixian looked up for a while and frowned. “Those things are looking down at us.”

After the barrier was broken, the demons and monsters saw them and swarmed over. Later, when they fell into the deep pit, the demons and monsters didn’t follow. Instead, they surrounded the ice pit at the top.

But, none of them came down.

Yan Jin had a deeper understanding of the monsters. He looked at them for a moment and said softly, “There are things down here that they’re afraid of.”

Xue Ci looked around. There was only ice and snow all around them. Aside from a foggy, pervading cold, there were no other living creatures. He didn’t find anything wrong so he jokingly said, “Could they be afraid of us?”

Shen Zhixian knew that Yan Jin wouldn’t joke around. He continued to look around, until, suddenly his expression shifted. He said, “No, look at the ice wall--”

By this point, the foggy cold air had dissipated somewhat, revealing the images on the ice wall.

Xue Ci sucked in a breath.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 78 part1

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“The village was full of ordinary people. When they saw this scene, they were too scared to leave their house. The next day, they gathered together, wanting to burn the child alive, thinking that he was a demon and, if kept alive, might release more demons to come and kill them.”

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The child’s parents tried to help him escape, but they were killed by the fire. The child was in shock for a long time. Suddenly, he went mad, rushed into the kitchen that was still on fire, and grabbed the kitchen knife and the whetstone.

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Because of this ability, he also suffered a lot. He eventually developed a righteous and evil temperament; he could open up a killing ring due to the unintentional words of others, but he would also exhaust his spiritual power just to save a dying old man.

The world was afraid of the knife in his hand and was even more afraid of the things he sculpted. They called him the “Ghost Hand” out of fear. The Ghost Hand carried both praise and infamy so he wandered for most of his life. Suddenly, one day, he disappeared and was nowhere to be found.

“He hid in the mountains, used his knowledge, which was contaminated with countless hatreds and gratitudes, and carved a secret realm with the whole mountain as the base.” Xue Ci took a deep breath and said, “This is that place.”

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With his toes, Shen Zhixian gently kicked at the snow under his feet. The snow and ice were uneven, and he realized at once that he was stepping on a creature with a big head and a small body. He couldn't help but wonder what kind of monster it was.

He silently took a few steps back. Yan Jin was behind him and didn't retreat. He quietly and naturally reached out and held his waist to steady him.

Shen Zhixian silently placed his hands over Yan Jin's hands. When he looked at the creatures again, he found that the creature's eye sockets were empty. The Ghost Hand hadn't carved his eyes.

But, under the ice, something seemed to be slowly gathering within the eye sockets.

"This--"

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dead. To destroy the secret realm, we would probably need to find his knife, which he used to carve these things. But, this is not the point.” Xue Ci was very serious. “The point is that the things in this ice pit are waking up right now.”

Shen Zhixian felt something shaking under his feet. He was shocked and dragged Yan Jin away.

The moment he moved, there was a loud noise and the place where he’d stood just moments before crumbled. The unknown monster with the big head broke out. Shaking off the ice on his body, he took two steps forward, his steps both light and heavy, and let a deep and grotesque growl.

“These things are born with blood and will come to life with spiritual power. Earlier, to avoid the ice cones, we used our spiritual power. Lian Qin was injured and bled. These two things were enough to wake up these things.” Xue Ci said quickly, “Let's leave here first and talk later.”

The sound of breaking ice was getting louder and louder. Even though two of them hadn’t fully recovered, at least seven to eight monsters had already jumped out from the ice. They needed to avoid these creatures now.

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Therefore, the demons and monsters he'd carved were also complicated and strange; many of them were ancient creatures that were now extinct.

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Looking at this scene, Shen Zhixian's brain hurt.

The others didn't fare much better.

Duan Yuan followed Lian Qin and shared his mount with him. Because the little fairy crane was now carrying two people, it was having difficulties running away. It was grabbed until feathers fell down and its tail became bald.

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Shattering the demon beast statues and assailing them with Duan Yuan’s musical attack was actually quite efficient.

Xue Ci was on his tortoise. The tortoise had retracted its head into its shell, relying on the thick skin of its four flippers and the hard shell on its back as protection. It crashed through the creatures, scattering them. Meanwhile, Xue Ci took the opportunity to shoot them down.

As more demon beasts ice statues rushed over, their numbers became overwhelming.

After Xue Ci crashed into several demon beasts, he shouted to Shen Zhixian, “.... Ghost Hand’s carving knife… your sword spirit…”

The demon beasts statues' roars completely drowned his voice, and even though Shen Zhixian listened carefully, he could only hear a few words.

He thought about Xue Ci’s words and immediately reacted. He needed sword spirit to figure out this situation….

Shen Zhixian glanced at Yan Jin.

He acted decisively and shouted “A’jin!” before jumping from his mount. He tapped the head of the demon beast ice statue beside him and jumped toward Yan Jin.

Yan Jin was close to him. Even though he was preoccupied, the moment he heard Shen Zhixian’s call, he immediately knew his intention.

He brought the pegasus close and positioned himself in front of Shen Zhixian. As Shen Zhixian landed steadily on the horse’s back, he let out a sigh of relief. “A’jin, control the horse. I have to summon Frost Return back.”

Yan Jin murmured “mmnn” in his ear. The pegasus’s back wasn’t too large so they sat tightly pressed against one another. Yan Jin firmly held Shen

Zhixian’s waist with one hand while the other controlled the pegasus to repel the statues that continued to streamed toward them.

Frost Return’s sword spirit had penetrated the center of the secret realm. Half of the sword spirit was in the secret realm while the outer half was outside. Shen Zhixian contemplated it carefully and finally summoned Frost Return to respond to him.

Frost Return’s sword spirit was not a physical entity and so Shen Zhixian dared not call back the entire sword spirit. He could only use the sword spirit awareness as much as possible to investigate the entire secret realm.

This required his complete attention, with no room for negligence. If Shen Zhixian was alone or had someone untrustworthy by his side, he would not be able to fully use spirit awareness. Fortunately, Yan Jin was by his side.

Shen Zhixian’s awareness spread omnipotently from the sword's intent and scattered throughout the entire secret realm. He closed his eyes, his hand trembling slightly on his sword. Suddenly, he sensed something and his eyes snapped to look in a general direction. “East!”

His eyes had a ray of light, reflecting the ice and snow, and emitted a faint chill. “Go east. A fiend had already found the Ghost Hand’s knife.”

They’d underestimated the group of demons and monsters that had come out of the wasteland. They had thought that these creatures only wanted to hide in the secret realm. But, it turned out that the creatures’ idea was to completely control the secret realm!

This secret realm can be regarded as fairly ancient. If it really fell into the hands of these groups of demons and monsters, Shen Zhixian knew that he and his companion would have a difficult time leaving the secret realm with their life and body intact, much less successfully eradicating these creatures.

After passing the message to Xue Ci, Lian Qin, and Duan Yuan, Yan Jin controlled the pegasus and took Shen Zhixian east.

They rushed out of the ice pit. However, beyond the ice pit, there were countless demons and monsters lying in wait. When they came out, these creatures screamed excitedly and swarmed like bees toward them.

Like a pack of wolves before a tiger.

The demons and monsters at the front may have been given instructions. With clear goals, they came straight at Shen Zhixian and company. However, the demon beast ice statues in the back coveted the spiritual powers in Shen Zhixian and company's bodies and refused to relent to the demons and monsters. They also attacked them, tearing them apart and drinking their devil qi until they became dried corpses.

Yan Jin simply allowed the two sides to confront each other and violently rushed out of the way. Shen Zhixian thought he might hold Yan Jin back and wanted to leave but Yan Jin stopped him. He thought about it and continued to stay with Yan Jin while concentrating on using the sword spirit to sense the Ghost Hand's knife.

Although these demon beast ice statues and the demons and monsters didn't get along well and would fight against each other, both sides ultimately had an end goal, and that was Shen Zhixian and company. The demon beast statues did not fear pain nor death, and the demons and monsters were rabid and vicious. Everyone had a hard time escaping injury.

After flying east for a while, the surrounding environment began to turn weird.

It was still cold Winter, leaving the landscape bathed in icy white. But, suddenly, it burst with greens. Flowers and grass shot through the ice, growing so fast that soon the landscape became awashed with green.

It was just that the spring scene didn't last long. The flowers and green leaves rapidly withered, leaving only a few spring flowers adorned with ice silk. Under the scorching sun, snowflakes began to float down the sky and the gurgling river froze over.

The scenes of the fours seasons blended together, with the mountains a lush green on one side and decaying yellow on the other. It was full of a sense of disobedience.

There was a strong breath nearby. Shen Zhixian's expression became austere. "Just ahead."

And then there was no need to say anymore. Everyone saw that most critical object in the secret realm.

It was a large knife about two feet tall. It had a dark blade with a plain handle carved with simple patterns. It was adorned no ornamental accessories. Perhaps once, it used to have ornaments but these probably scattered into dusts along with its master.

The knife's tip was pointed down, embedded into the land with the handle upright. It seemed to be pulling itself out of the soil.

--Wrong!

Xue Ci shouted, "Black qi! It's a fiend!"

The blade was dark all over and entwined around it was black qi. It was camouflaged so neatly that it was difficult to see. The black qi wrapped around the knife's body, slowly pulling it out of the dirt!

Lian Qin, Duan Yuan, and Xue Ci followed close behind Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. In front of the knife, the demon beast statue seemed a little afraid and began to hesitate. The demons and monsters also seemed to be afraid of the black qi. They spread out and stared, encircling them but refusing to step closer to the knife.

Shen Zhixian and company finally had a chance to take a breather, but no one dared take advantage of it. Compared to the things behind them, the lethality of the knife in front of them was obviously much greater. After all, this was the weapon used by Ghost Hands to sculpt the entire secret realm.

Even though the Ghost Hand was no longer present, the knife alone could still destroy them.

What's more, the knife was in the hands of the fiend who was not friendly to them.

There were tens of thousands of forms of demons and monsters and they came in all shapes and sizes. However, the most troublesome was this black qi form. This type of fiend spirits can shift into various shapes and sizes and can turn into smoke and escape, making them extremely difficult to catch.

Seeing that the blade was nearly pulled out, with only a small tip of the knife buried in the soil, Shen Zhixian resolutely said, "Grab it."

The sword spirit was starting to loosen it's hold on the secret realm. The entire secret realm seemed to be shaking, as if it would lift up and run anytime. Once that knife was completely pulled, things would become even more difficult.

While the demons and monsters around refused to move, the five of them rushed forward from different directions, aiming to snatch the big knife.

But, they were one step too slow. The knife was completely pulled out by the fiend, and the mountains instantly began to shake. The ground began to tremble, while a dull thunderous roar sounded incessantly. The roar seemed to come from the sky and the land, from near and far.

Many demon beast ice statues cracked and shattered, while the demons and monsters scattered and ran, trying to avoid the falling rocks.

The knife hung, dangling, for a moment and then, in the next moment, it slashed toward Shen Zhixian without any warning!

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Duan Yuan used sound to defend himself. Even though Lian Qin was recently injured, he didn't go light on the creatures either. At this critical moment, he didn't bother using his killer music skills and simply used his guqin as a cudgel to smash the ice demon beasts.

Shattering the demon beast statues and assailing them with Duan Yuan’s musical attack was actually quite efficient.

Xue Ci was on his tortoise. The tortoise had retracted its head into its shell, relying on the thick skin of its four flippers and the hard shell on its back as protection. It crashed through the creatures, scattering them. Meanwhile, Xue Ci took the opportunity to shoot them down.

As more demon beasts ice statues rushed over, their numbers became overwhelming.

After Xue Ci crashed into several demon beasts, he shouted to Shen Zhixian, “.... Ghost Hand’s carving knife… your sword spirit…”

The demon beasts statues' roars completely drowned his voice, and even though Shen Zhixian listened carefully, he could only hear a few words.

He thought about Xue Ci’s words and immediately reacted. He needed sword spirit to figure out this situation….

Shen Zhixian glanced at Yan Jin.

He acted decisively and shouted “A’jin!” before jumping from his mount. He tapped the head of the demon beast ice statue beside him and jumped toward Yan Jin.

Yan Jin was close to him. Even though he was preoccupied, the moment he heard Shen Zhixian’s call, he immediately knew his intention.

He brought the pegasus close and positioned himself in front of Shen Zhixian. As Shen Zhixian landed steadily on the horse’s back, he let out a sigh of relief. “A’jin, control the horse. I have to summon Frost Return back.”

Yan Jin murmured “mmnn” in his ear. The pegasus’s back wasn’t too large so they sat tightly pressed against one another. Yan Jin firmly held Shen

Zhixian’s waist with one hand while the other controlled the pegasus to repel the statues that continued to streamed toward them.

Frost Return’s sword spirit had penetrated the center of the secret realm. Half of the sword spirit was in the secret realm while the outer half was outside. Shen Zhixian contemplated it carefully and finally summoned Frost Return to respond to him.

Frost Return’s sword spirit was not a physical entity and so Shen Zhixian dared not call back the entire sword spirit. He could only use the sword spirit awareness as much as possible to investigate the entire secret realm.

This required his complete attention, with no room for negligence. If Shen Zhixian was alone or had someone untrustworthy by his side, he would not be able to fully use spirit awareness. Fortunately, Yan Jin was by his side.

Shen Zhixian’s awareness spread omnipotently from the sword's intent and scattered throughout the entire secret realm. He closed his eyes, his hand trembling slightly on his sword. Suddenly, he sensed something and his eyes snapped to look in a general direction. “East!”

His eyes had a ray of light, reflecting the ice and snow, and emitted a faint chill. “Go east. A fiend had already found the Ghost Hand’s knife.”

They’d underestimated the group of demons and monsters that had come out of the wasteland. They had thought that these creatures only wanted to hide in the secret realm. But, it turned out that the creatures’ idea was to completely control the secret realm!

This secret realm can be regarded as fairly ancient. If it really fell into the hands of these groups of demons and monsters, Shen Zhixian knew that he and his companion would have a difficult time leaving the secret realm with their life and body intact, much less successfully eradicating these creatures.

After passing the message to Xue Ci, Lian Qin, and Duan Yuan, Yan Jin controlled the pegasus and took Shen Zhixian east.

They rushed out of the ice pit. However, beyond the ice pit, there were countless demons and monsters lying in wait. When they came out, these creatures screamed excitedly and swarmed like bees toward them.

Like a pack of wolves before a tiger.

The demons and monsters at the front may have been given instructions. With clear goals, they came straight at Shen Zhixian and company. However, the demon beast ice statues in the back coveted the spiritual powers in Shen Zhixian and company's bodies and refused to relent to the demons and monsters. They also attacked them, tearing them apart and drinking their devil qi until they became dried corpses.

Yan Jin simply allowed the two sides to confront each other and violently rushed out of the way. Shen Zhixian thought he might hold Yan Jin back and wanted to leave but Yan Jin stopped him. He thought about it and continued to stay with Yan Jin while concentrating on using the sword spirit to sense the Ghost Hand's knife.

Although these demon beast ice statues and the demons and monsters didn't get along well and would fight against each other, both sides ultimately had an end goal, and that was Shen Zhixian and company. The demon beast statues did not fear pain nor death, and the demons and monsters were rabid and vicious. Everyone had a hard time escaping injury.

After flying east for a while, the surrounding environment began to turn weird.

It was still cold Winter, leaving the landscape bathed in icy white. But, suddenly, it burst with greens. Flowers and grass shot through the ice, growing so fast that soon the landscape became awashed with green.

It was just that the spring scene didn't last long. The flowers and green leaves rapidly withered, leaving only a few spring flowers adorned with ice silk. Under the scorching sun, snowflakes began to float down the sky and the gurgling river froze over.

The scenes of the fours seasons blended together, with the mountains a lush green on one side and decaying yellow on the other. It was full of a sense of disobedience.

There was a strong breath nearby. Shen Zhixian's expression became austere. "Just ahead."

And then there was no need to say anymore. Everyone saw that most critical object in the secret realm.

It was a large knife about two feet tall. It had a dark blade with a plain handle carved with simple patterns. It was adorned no ornamental accessories. Perhaps once, it used to have ornaments but these probably scattered into dusts along with its master.

The knife's tip was pointed down, embedded into the land with the handle upright. It seemed to be pulling itself out of the soil.

--Wrong!

Xue Ci shouted, "Black qi! It's a fiend!"

The blade was dark all over and entwined around it was black qi. It was camouflaged so neatly that it was difficult to see. The black qi wrapped around the knife's body, slowly pulling it out of the dirt!

Lian Qin, Duan Yuan, and Xue Ci followed close behind Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. In front of the knife, the demon beast statue seemed a little afraid and began to hesitate. The demons and monsters also seemed to be afraid of the black qi. They spread out and stared, encircling them but refusing to step closer to the knife.

Shen Zhixian and company finally had a chance to take a breather, but no one dared take advantage of it. Compared to the things behind them, the lethality of the knife in front of them was obviously much greater. After all, this was the weapon used by Ghost Hands to sculpt the entire secret realm.

Even though the Ghost Hand was no longer present, the knife alone could still destroy them.

What's more, the knife was in the hands of the fiend who was not friendly to them.

There were tens of thousands of forms of demons and monsters and they came in all shapes and sizes. However, the most troublesome was this black qi form. This type of fiend spirits can shift into various shapes and sizes and can turn into smoke and escape, making them extremely difficult to catch.

Seeing that the blade was nearly pulled out, with only a small tip of the knife buried in the soil, Shen Zhixian resolutely said, "Grab it."

The sword spirit was starting to loosen it's hold on the secret realm. The entire secret realm seemed to be shaking, as if it would lift up and run anytime. Once that knife was completely pulled, things would become even more difficult.

While the demons and monsters around refused to move, the five of them rushed forward from different directions, aiming to snatch the big knife.

But, they were one step too slow. The knife was completely pulled out by the fiend, and the mountains instantly began to shake. The ground began to tremble, while a dull thunderous roar sounded incessantly. The roar seemed to come from the sky and the land, from near and far.

Many demon beast ice statues cracked and shattered, while the demons and monsters scattered and ran, trying to avoid the falling rocks.

The knife hung, dangling, for a moment and then, in the next moment, it slashed toward Shen Zhixian without any warning!

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 78 part2

The Ghost Hand had killed so many and so his carving knife brimmed with violent resentment. Without its master to suppress it, its resentment angered the fiend into uncontrollable excitement. The black qi blended in with the blade’s dark essence, making it difficult for Shen Zhixian to determine whether the black vapor belonged to the blade or the fiend.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin were standing very close together. As the knife sliced down, it separated them. The body's instinct was faster than thinking; they simultaneously produced their sword.

The fiend didn’t have complete control of the knife yet. Not only had it just unearthed the knife moments ago, but the knife’s resentment was also very heavy. The knife sliced down with great power. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin didn’t try to meet force with force. Instead, they only separated and moved out of its path.

The knife ended up slashing the ground, splitting a deep crack into the soil. The ground around the crack was black, as if charred by fire.

A strand of black qi quietly drifted out of the crack and streaked toward Shen Zhixian.

It happened to be approaching on Shen Zhixian’s blind spot and so he didn’t see it. However, Yan Jin saw it and intercepted it with his sword.

His movements ended up attracting the knife. It rose up and slashed toward Yan Jin while his sword was still in the middle of attacking the black qi.

Yan Jin’s eyebrows slightly twitched. He deflected the black qi and turned his waist to avoid the knife. Due to his speed, the knife was only able to leave a light scratch on his arm.

Blood quickly oozed out.

When Shen Zhixian turned and saw this, his expression grew cold. But, he had no time to say anything.

The fiend couldn’t control the knife well. The knife trembled. One moment, it would hack this way and, in the next moment, it would hack another way. There was no order to its movements, only frenzied hacking and slashing. Before long, the ground was full of splits and cracks, creating a chaotic mix of spiritual qi and devil qi.

Everyone could only dodge, unable to directly resist.

Lian Qin narrowly avoided a blow. His previous injury hadn’t completely healed. At this time, after much fighting and movements, the injury had split open. He covered his wound and let out a ragged breath. “There are too many demons and monsters here and the devil qi are plentiful. We will only exhaust ourselves.”

Shen Zhixian pondered for a moment. Using his sword to avoid the knife, he said, “Lock Array.”

Since they each couldn’t resist the knife alone, they could create a formation to consolidate all their strengths to defeat the knife together.

Hearing his words, Yan Jin’s expression grew heavy.

Xue Ci asked, “Lock Array...It’s not impossible to create. It’s just the eye of the array…”

As its name implied, a Lock Array’s intent was to suppress and lock down the enemy. However, this was unique in that it not only required a formation, but a person must remain inside the formation to source its

power and confront the enemy.

In other words, if they chose to use the Lock Array, a person must stand inside the formation to consolidate everyone's strength and use it to confront the carving knife head-on.

Shen Zhixian didn't think about it too much and said, "I'll do it."

He slightly lowered his sword and said in a low voice, "Frost Return!"

The moment he called, the sword spirit emitted a clear whistle. It rose from the ground and, in the blink of an eye, returned to Shen Zhixian.

The fiend holding on to the carving knife seemed tired. It paused for a moment, conserving its strength.

Qingyun Sect was the premier sword sect and Shen Zhixian was its leader. Moreover, he had a powerful sword spirit to support him.

Xue Ci didn't hesitate anymore and quickly calculated three positions. "Hurry!"

Usually, four people would support the formation. However, they would have to make do with three positions and one centered eye. They were worried that Lian Qin wouldn't be able to withstand it and so they allowed Duan Yuan to support him. While Lian Qin and Duan Yuan positioned together on one side and Xue Ci and Yan Jin on separate sides, Shen Zhixian stood alone in the middle to face the carving knife.

Yan Jin happened to be standing diagonally across from Shen Zhixian, directly facing him. His expression was a little heavy. His thin lips slightly moved, mouthing two silent words. "Be careful."

Shen Zhixian smiled at him, hoping to make him feel at ease.

Frost Return felt the devil qi and was already eager to engage. Shen Zhixian chuckled. "Frost Return, do you see that black knife?"

Frost Return responded with an eager, abrupt tremble.

Shen Zhixian said, “Break it!”

As soon his words fell, Frost Return separated into two swords, one without a solid form yet brimming with a cold fighting spirit.

With three people supporting the formation outside, spiritual power gathered in Shen Zhixian’s hands. He firmly grasped his sword and watched as the knife rose up unsteadily, its blade swirling with black qi. Then, the handle lowered and knocked against the ground.

Suddenly, it was like a command had been issued. Their surroundings grew agitated. The demon beast ice sculptures and the monster that had been hesitating suddenly summoned their courage and rushed toward them.

Because of this sudden action, the formation grew quickly chaotic. Fortunately, Yan Jin and everyone quickly stabilized themselves.

But now, everyone had to not only maintain the formation but also guard against their attackers. Once the situation became too difficult, they could no longer completely pass spiritual power to Shen Zhixian inside the formation.

The black qi seemed to know their formation's power. It didn’t move forward but continued to remain in place, its handle urgently striking the ground.

Shen Zhixian turned around and kicked away two demon beast sculptures. He slashed his sword behind him, beheading a demon and causing blood to spurt onto the ground.

Xiao Caoya crawled out of Shen Zhixian’s sleeve with some difficulties. It was too dangerous here. It was just a small grass bud and didn’t have much fighting ability except for its strength.

Shen Zhixian moved like lightning, so fast that Xiao Caoya had to cling hard to Shen Zhixian’s collar to prevent itself from being thrown off.

When Shen Zhixian felt it, he hurriedly said, “Go back into my sleeve and stay there.”

Xiao Caoya chirped. But the surrounding was too noisy, and its voice was so small that it was immediately overwhelmed

It anxiously poked hard at Shen Zhixian with a small leave, trying hard to attract his attention. .

Shen Zhixian couldn’t feel it and had no time to pay much attention to it. Xiao Caoya became more and more anxious and pulled a few small leaves out.

Because two of its leaves were no longer clinging to Shen Zhixian, it’s hold was unstable. The moment Shen Zhixian turned to avoid a fiend, it was caught off guard and went flying.

The tiny grass bud was nearly invisible amidst the thick convergence of demon beast sculptures and monsters. It wasn’t very scared and, using the violent wind created by the movements all around it, it flew through the gaps between bodies until it found Yan Jin.

Yan Jin was almost confused by it. Holding the grass bud in and chopping an ice sculpture with the other, he lowered his head to quickly look at Xiao Caoya. He immediately saw that two small leaves were curled around his fingers while the remaining leaf was pointed in Shen Zhixian’s direction.

This was…

Yan Jin suddenly realized that the unresponsive contract within his spiritual sea was slowly heating up. A thought came to his mind. He hurriedly put Xiao Caoya away and carved a path toward the general direction where Lain Qin and Duan Yuan should be.

Lian Qin and Duan Yuan seemed okay. With both the two fellow disciples fighting side by side, it seemed like they weren't having too much difficulties. Yan Jin kicked away a monster for Lian Qin and said, "Can you still do it?"

Lian Qin looked at him. Seeing that he had an idea, Lian Qin assessed himself and decisively said, "Might as well."

Yan Jin responded with a "good," took hold of Duan Yuan, and pulled him back the same way he'd come from.

Using his xun, Duan Yuan smashed the demon beast sculptures and monsters all around, thinking that his instrument was too small. In the past, he'd thought that his senior brother's guqin was really troublesome to carry around. Now, he knew that the bigger the instrument, the better it is to smash someone!

Yan Jin slipped him into his place, not allowing him to resist. "Replace me. Set up the formation."

Duan Yuan was surprised and said, "I, Senior Brother… What's going on…?"

His voice was soon drowned out. Yan Jin didn't care anymore about him and cut a path toward Xue Ci to tell him to continue his formation.

The formation was once again restarted. Duan Yuan wasn't as talented as Yan Jin and had difficulties starting. However, he tried his best to transfer his spiritual power, not caring too much about the monsters besieging him. Immediately, he felt a few bloody wounds on his body and pain on his face.

Gritting his teeth, he endured, thinking optimistically that this time he was really going to be disfigured and if he managed to return safely back to the sect, the other disciples probably wouldn't recognize him….

With the formation broken, Shen Zhixian knew that his companions were in difficult straits and so he had no other choice but to fight desperately. As he

fought, he suddenly realized that three different powers were once again gathering in his hand. Xue Ci and the others had restarted the formation!

But Shen Zhixian was shaken to the core. Although the formation was restarted….he didn’t feel Yan Jin’s spiritual power.

Suddenly, the black knife slashed at him. Shen Zhixian used his sword to evade, surprised by its sudden movement.

As he stepped back, he fell into a warm embrace.

A familiar breath surrounded him. Because the situation was urgent, Yan Jin didn't explain much. He just quickly said the word "contract" in Shen Zhixian's ear and released his hands.

Almost as soon as Yan Jin's words fell, the contract in Shen Zhixian's spiritual sea grew scalding hot. It seemed to have sensed something. It rapidly rose up, causing his spiritual sea to surge.

This kind of feeling was very strange, but it also aroused Shen Zhixian's battle spirits. Before, he was growing fatigued, but now his spiritual power was suddenly filled up. He realized what was happening and looked at Yan Jin. As he was about to speak, he saw that Yan Jin was empty-handed.

“Where’s your sword?”

Yan Jin didn't answer, but his eyes were fixed on Frost Return in Shen Zhixian’s hand. His lips moved slightly, "Sui Xian, lend me your sword.”

His eyes gradually turned red, glowing bright and clear as ruby. Since he was no longer suppressing his devil qi, a pervading chill spread out. The demons and monsters that had escaped from the wasteland were cowed by his suppression and couldn’t help but take a few steps back.

Yan Jin wrapped his fingers around Shen Zhixian’s wrist and transferred spiritual force to him.

In turn, Frost Return began to stir restlessly.

Shen Zhixian whispered, “Frost Return, be good.”

While coaxing Frost Return, he responded to Yan Jin’s spiritual qi and led it to his spiritual sea.

Shen Zhixian now had the spiritual power of five people combined in his hand, but only Yan Jin had preferential treatment.

The contract was deep within his spiritual sea.

Shen Zhixian trusted Yan Jin fully and without reservation. He unfolded his spiritual sea to Yan Jin, allowing Yan Jin’s spiritual force to invade it easily with absolutely no obstacles.

When he finally had direct contact with the other half of the contract, Yan Jin’s eyes darkened and an unprecedented excitement surged up in him. He’d never felt so clearly that he and the person in front of him had merged into a single entity.

Shen Zhixian also sent his own spiritual power into Yan Jin’s spiritual sea and touched the contract within, where the two met, causing their bodies to slightly tremble.

This battle, there was no way they could lose.

This thought flashed through their minds at the same time and was passed along to the other through the contract.

Shen Zhixian’s lips curled up. He took a deep breath, raised his sword steadily, and faced the carving knife.

His sword seemed to contain infinite power. This was no longer just a simple formation of five people. The spiritual qi inside the entire secret realm was mobilized, with Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin as the center, forming a huge vortex.

Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin stood at the center of the vortex, trying their best to borrow the spiritual power of this earth-shattering sword--

The sun and the moon lost their colors. The mountains and rivers cracked and shattered. Countless demon beast sculptures turned into ice water in an instant. The ground trembled, cracking with innumerable giant slits, leaving the demons and monsters with no place to stand. They could only fall into the deep crevices with terrible howls.

Black qi wrapped around the Ghost Hand’s carving knife, ready to fiercely greet the sword.

The knife’s heavy essence roiled with evil energies as the fiend’s dark qi intertwined with it. The knife angrily slashed at Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin but it fell short and was intercepted by Frost Return’s cold sword qi.

Shen Zhixian stood firmly, not retreating a single step. Beside to him, Yan Jin held his hand out to the side, turned his wrist, and another sword appeared on his palm.

Yan Jin's sword had followed him through countless battles in the wasteland. When Yan Jin became a devil, the sword also became a demonic sword. But, Yan Jin usually concealed it very well. Aside from Shen Zhixian, no one else noticed.

This time, he didn’t bother hiding it. Cold devil qi lingered around the sword, revealing its dark nature. Yan Jin clenched the sword’s handle, and the sword began to eagerly absorb the devil qi scattered around him. He suddenly raised his hand, and his sword fell cleanly, intersecting with Frost Return. The edge of the two blades clang against each other!

There was a loud boom as thunder snapped through the air.

The carving knife couldn't withstand it. It was forced back until the handle dug into the ground, creating a deep hole. Even so, it still couldn’t resist and could only move back slightly.

The backward movement precisely predicated its utter defeat.

The contract burned hotly within Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin’s spiritual sea. They communicated without words. Acting in perfect unison, they completely broke the knife in two.

The black qi couldn’t escape in time and was also split in half. It panicked, swirling around the knife that had just been cut into two pieces. It was as if the fiend couldn’t quite understand why such a powerful secret realm, such a powerful knife, couldn’t withstand and kill the other side.

But it was already too late for reflections. The broken carving knife still had a lingering resentful energy. It whirled around and thoroughly crushed the fiend. Then, it dissipated into a strand of smoke that ceased to exist.

With the knife destroyed, the remaining power that supported the secret realm began to evaporate. As it did so, the secret realm quickly became fragmented. Their surroundings began to distort and blur. Like an ink painting that had been splashed with water, it was impossible to restore.

The vortex of spiritual qi vanished and the connection between the three points of support snapped. Shen Zhixian stood inside the center of the formation. Even though Yan Jin had helped him, he’d still used a great deal of energy. At this moment, his heart was beating violently and fatigue swept over him, making his breath come out in quick pants.

Using one hand to hold him steady, Yan Jin’s voice rang clearly in his ear, calm and reassuring. “Don’t be afraid. I’m here.”

Shen Zhixian wanted to retort that who was afraid? He wasn't made of soft tofu. But, he changed his mind at the last moment, thinking that Yan Jin wasn’t just anyone. It wouldn’t be a bad thing to be soft and vulnerable in front of him.

This event was too big and too exhausting. When Shen Zhixian returned, he wanted to rest for a year and a half. Take a leisure...

Shen Zhixian vaguely remembered a word.

Honeymoon.

Yes, that seemed to be the word.

With this, the entire cultivation realm would be at rest for a while. Once he explained these matters to the sect, he would take advantage of this peaceful time and rest with Yan Jin for a long time!

These two years had been full of frequent twists and turns. He was so busy that he felt as if his feet hadn’t time to touch the ground. It felt like it’s been a long, long time...since he had been able to spend good, quality days alone with Yan Jin.

Every intimate moment with him was like sunlight leaking from between his fingers, so short and light that it was unsatisfactory.

As heaven fell and earth rended, Shen Zhixian quietly took Yan Jin’s hand.

.....

Outside the secret realm.

When the large secret realm shattered, the outside world was naturally not unaffected.

Many demons and monsters escaped from the cracks in the mountain. Eyes red, they attacked the disciples who had gathered outside. Everyone came together and fought back. Although, in the end, they were battered and exhausted, everyone fought bravely resolutely.

Wu Xuan watched as the whole mountain began to collapse, his heart tight. Kicking away a demon beast, he quickly began to count his fingers, calculating a hexagram.

After counting for a while, his entire body grew excited. He happily cried, “Wonderful! Wonderful! The cloud is scattered by the moon hexagram. This hexagram is good. An absolutely good hexagram!”

A junior disciple who looked battered and disheveled stabbed a demon beast that was trying to sneak an attack on Wu Xuan. He wiped his face and, since there was no time to pay respects, quickly said, “Just leave it be and focus on fighting…”

There was sand and gravel flying everyone. After a quarter of an hour, the entire mountain crashed down and became a ruined rubble.

Many of the demons and monsters hiding inside the secret realm were killed when it shattered. The small number that did escape were soon killed by the people they met outside and none were spared.

There were corpses everywhere, all still drenched in blood. Meanwhile, the dust continued to fly.

From the ruins, there were finally some small movements.

They came out from the pile of rubble in various places. Duan Yuan held Lian Qin, Xue Ci’s big turtle dragged him, while Yan Jin half-supported Shen Zhixian.

Everyone felt extremely wretched. This was probably the most wretched moment of their lives.

For a while, there was only silence. Then, all the disciples began to cheer, their faces filled with relief. The demons and monsters that had troubled them for so long were finally eliminated. They wanted to run a hundred laps to celebrate.

There was a small, fat, and straightforward disciple who looked at a certain area. He suddenly exclaimed, “Lord of the Wasteland!”

In the midst of cheering, this cry was very small. But, it immediately

attracted everyone’s attention and their eyes followed his pointed finger.

With a single glance, they were stunned.

The person next to the Qingyun Sect Leader Shen...was the rumored Lord of the Wasteland, who conquered the demons of the wasteland… This was precisely that big devil?

Shen Zhixian suddenly realized that everyone was looking at them. He turned his head, only to find that Yan Jin had changed into his usual “Lord of the Wasteland” appearance. He had on his mask and, out from it, gleamed a pair of blood-red eyes that looked rather thoughtful.

“What are…?”

As Shen Zhixian was wondering what Yan Jin was up to, Yan Jin suddenly gently clasped his waist, pulled out his sword, and slashed out a side formation.

“Until next time.” Yan Jin threw out these two words and, not looking at anyone, walked into the formation.

Xue Ci and Wu Xuan were too far away from Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin. When Yan Jin did this, everyone took a shocked moment to react. Finally, a young disciple gave out an alarmed cry, “The Lord of the Wasteland abducted Qingyun Sect Leader Shen!”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master Chapter 79

The number of times Shen Zhixian came to the wasteland was actually very few.

At the beginning, Yan Jin didn’t want him to come because of the demons in the wasteland. So, he always took the initiative to go to Qingyun Sect. Later, after Yan Jin had completely conquered the wasteland, he would only allow Shen Zhixian to visit a few times, but his stay would be very short.

The last time Shen Zhixian came to the wasteland was half a year ago. His impression at that time was that the wasteland was still a land of boundless darkness.

But this time, when he opened his eyes, he was stunned.

The person who brought him had disappeared, and Shen Zhixian stood alone. When he opened his eyes, he saw the endless, countless stars in the night sky. A breeze was blowing, creating a scene that was like fine starlight.

Shen Zhixian stared blankly for a moment, then his lips curved into a soft smile.

The breeze blew something against his cheek. Shen Zhixian lifted his hand and pulled it away. A soft, lightly fragrant petal was held between his fingers. He shifted his gaze to the side and saw a tall peach tree.

This peach tree was like the peach blossom branch that Shen Zhixian had given Yan Jin in the secret realm. Yan Jin must have planted it here, and

Xiao Caoya must have grown it. At the moment, the peach tree was bursting with peach blossoms, the branches swaying and seducing people’s eyes.

A swing was attached to a branch that stretched out horizontally and was overflowing with peach blossoms.

The swing looked very unusual. Between the two long ropes was a seat that looked like it was neither made out of wood nor jade. It was white and looked soft...as if it was a puffy cloud.

Shen Zhixian walked over and reached out to squeeze it. It was indeed very soft. His eyes brightened and he felt that this swing must be very comfortable to sit on. He sat down on the soft seat and swung for a while. But, he quickly grew bored swinging alone.

Yan Jin, that big pig trotter, brought him over and disappeared again.

Shen Zhixian reluctantly left the swing and moved away in the direction guided by the contract.

The stars in the sky illuminate the path ahead of him. As he walked, a familiar scene came into view. This looked like that place he’d seen in Yan Jin’s memory.

It was the place in the last life where they had lived and where Yan Jin had helped condensed his soul for him.

The only difference was that, in the last life, Yan Jin had built this house in a beautifully scenic place. But, in this life, this house was built in the wasteland.

Shen Zhixian slowed his steps.

In front of the house was a large open space. The layout here was similar to that of their Fifth Peak in Qingyun Sect. There was a small pavilion and underneath laid a jade table and a warm jade bed, all arranged according to Shen Zhixian’s preference.

The door of the house was half-opened. Yan Jin stood by the door, his posture straight and steady, his face...as expressionless as usual. But, when Shen Zhixian saw him, he was somewhat reminded of a scene that was described in a book he'd once read. Yan Jin looked as if he was a husband waiting for his small wife to return.

Shen Zhixian walked toward him with a smile. After only taking two steps, he saw at once that Yan Jin's sleeve had a little blood stain. He smiled slightly, "You haven't treated your wound yet?"

Knowing that it was a wound made by the carving knife, Shen Zhixian want them to go into the house so he could take a look at it.

As he neared, he heard a low sound coming from a corner of the house.

A fluffy little paw came out from the side of the house, followed by a head with floppy, pointed ears and big dark eyes that blinked carefully and timidly at Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian looked at his slightly trembling ears and wondered, "What is this?"

He beckoned to the little hairball. The little hairball hesitated and ran out.

It was a fluffy little wolf cub.

Shen Zhixian loosened his hold on Yan Jin's arm and bent down to hug the little fluffy ball. "Ah, a little pet."

Yan Jin froze when he saw this little guy. He stared at it coldly, unexpectedly scaring it straight into Shen Zhixian's arms.

The little pet's spiritual force was very pure, indicating that its origin wasn't simple. It was very small with long, soft fur. Even its soft cry was very milky.

Shen Zhixian particularly liked furry creatures. He rubbed at the little pet until it began to cry in its soft baby voice. Finally, he put it back on the ground, stood up, and once again tried to get Yan Jin into the house. With a smiling face, he said, “You’re actually secretly raising a little wolf cub”.

Yan Jin pursed his lips and replied calmly, “I’m not raising it. It was just picked up by the rabbit demon.”

Of course, Yan Jin didn’t bother with personally managing the demons and monsters in the wasteland on a daily basis. It was usually the rabbit demon who carried out his various commands.

Although the rabbit demon looked weak, it was very clever. The fact that it could live safely in the wasteland for so long amidst many stronger enemies was enough to accurately reflect its ability. As a result, it’d become the communication link between Yan Jin and the wasteland demons.

Despite being a cunning rabbit demon, its weakness was its propensity to pick up all kinds of strange things, only to throw them away later.

For example, it had picked up this little wolf cub from who knew where but didn’t look after it well.

The little wolf cub liked to come to Yan Jin's residence very much. Fortunately, it was honest, and hadn’t wreaked havoc in Yan Jin's place. As a result, Yan Jin kept one eye opened and one eye closed.

But it actually attracted Shen Zhixian's attention in this way…

Yan Jin shot the little wolf club a cold look and silently made a note to talk to the rabbit demon before finally allowing Shen Zhixian to push him inside.

The little wolf cub followed, squatting cleverly not far from Shen Zhixian.

Shen Zhixian pushed the man down onto the edge of the bed. He heard the little wolf cub’s movements and turned his head to look at it.

The little guy cocked its head.

Shen Zhixian thought it was so cute. With a smile on his face, he couldn’t help teasing it with a few more soft words.

Yan Jin was left unattended in this way. His face grew cold. Finally, gritting his teeth, he stood up, strode over, picked up the little hairball, and walked a few steps to the door. He promptly deposited it outside and closed the door behind him.

The lock was drawn and, thinking that it wasn’t enough, he also added a restriction to prevent the little wolf cub…and others from entering.

Shen Zhixian raised his eyebrows and turned to silently look at Yan Jin as he shut out the little hairball. He only said “Why are you bullying the little guy?”, and then he patted the bed and motioned for Yan Jin to sit back down.

Shen Zhixian’s expression was normal and his smile was gentle and calm as usual. It seemed no different from any other days. But, somehow, Yan Jin’s heart was uneasy. He had an unknown feeling.

Yan Jin didn’t know if he was imagining it, but he sensed that Shen Zhixian seemed a little ... unhappy.

Was Shen Zhixian not happy because he suddenly exposed his identity and brought him into the wasteland?

Yan Jin pushed down the restlessness in his heart and sat down obediently. He looked solemnly at Shen Zhixian, not showing the slightest expression on his face.

Shen Zhixian ignored him and took out his storage bag. He pulled out a lot of medicines and set them aside, then he simply went ahead and undid Yan Jin’s clothes.

Yan Jin was very obedient and didn’t resist. He didn’t need Shen Zhixian to tell him what to do. He took the initiative and raised his hand to allow Shen Zhixian to slide the sleeve of his shirt down.

Since a bit of time had already passed, the blood on the wound had already coagulated. Shen Zhixian performed a cleansing spell and began to treat it. This wound wasn’t too serious. For Yan Jin, it was a minor injury. Once medicine was applied, it would quickly heal.

Shen Zhixian crushed a medicinal pellet and carefully packed the powder onto the wound. Yan Jin wanted to move, but Shen Zhixian patted his shoulder and calmly said, “Don’t move.”

Yan Jin didn't dare to move again. He hesitated for a moment, and asked in a low voice, “Is Master angry?"

Shen Zhixian asked back, “Why should I be angry?”

“You were angry because I brought you here without telling you…”

Shen Zhixian rubbed the rest of the medicine onto Yan Jin’s wound. Then, he smiled and lightly rubbed Yan Jin’s face, much in the same way that he did with the little wolf cub. He said, “I’m not angry. Turn around. Let me see if you’ve hurt your back.”

Shen Zhixian only said “not angry” but it was difficult to determine what else was wrong… As Yan Jin was thinking this over, he didn’t pay attention and absentmindedly allowed Shen Zhixian to turn him around. He didn’t react until he suddenly felt a hand gently brushed down his back.

“No other injuries…”

Yan Jin shifted in discomfort. He wanted to turn around but was held back by Shen Zhixian. He had no choice but to resist his longing and stand upright to allow Shen Zhixian to do as he pleased.

He couldn’t see him so Shen Zhixian's touch was all the more pronounced.

Yan Jin could clearly feel Shen Zhixian’s fingers slowly tracing the lines of his back.

After the heart injury had healed, Shen Zhixian was no longer as affected by the cold, but his body temperature was still somewhat low and his fingertips were always slightly cold.

At this moment, Yan Jin felt as if Shen Zhixian's fingertips were on fire, heating his skin and making beads of sweat dot his forehead.

Yan Jin's throat moved, and his voice was a little husky. “Sui Xian.”

“Mmn.” Shen Zhixian seemed to have no idea of the heat he was stirring and said with some regret, “There are some scars on your back. I told you before to put medicine on it, but you guarded me like I was a bandit.”

“I…”

Shen Zhixian didn't give him a chance to answer. He interrupted softly, “But it’s not too late. It can still be treated.”

Yan Jin wanted to say no, but the moment he opened his mouth, his rejection dissipated. A warm softness gently pressed against the scars on his back. The heat was light as a feather, making him tremble for no reason.

Immediately afterward, those soft, warm lips moved up, tracing his old scars.

Occasionally, there would be a hint of moisture.

Yan Jin was completely frozen.

Then, he turned abruptly and easily pressed the person on the bed.

In the last life, after Shen Zhixian’s scattered soul was condensed, he was very weak. Even a small bump would result in a bruise on his fair skin. Yan

Jin was worried and covered the house with all kinds of cushions. The bed, in particular, had a thick layer of it.

In this life, he also continued this habit and placed a soft and thick layer of cushion in the bed. When Shen Zhixian was suddenly overwhelmed, he found himself lying on a cotton pile with a heavy weight pressing him down. Yan Jin suppressed him with little effort, not allowing him to get up at all.

Yan Jin’s eyes had turned red and his breathing was heavy. Shen Zhixian was pressed close to him so naturally, he immediately felt his arousal.

Shen Zhixian smiled slightly and wrapped one arm around Yan Jin’s neck while the other hand touched Yan Jin’s face. He resisted slightly and said softly, “I'm sleepy.”

With Yan Jin’s hot breath on his face, Shen Zhixian repeated the words seriously and innocently, as if he was completely oblivious. “A’jin, I’m really sleepy.”

He deliberately softened his voice, his long eyelashes trembling, and vaguely revealed a bit of tiredness. Seeing Yan Jin staring at him, he blinked slowly, and the corners of his eyes immediately glowed with water, shining.

Having been with Yan Jin for so long, he knew clearly where Yan Jin's weakness lay, and what gesture will make Yan Jin yield.

Shen Zhixian slightly raised his head and accurately and quickly pressed a kiss to Yan Jin’s mouth. He complained, “It took a lot of effort to break that knife….”

Softly, he whispered, “I’m so sleepy. Shall we rest? I haven’t slept with you for a long time.”

Every sentence was a huge temptation.

But the man who gave birth to the temptation only smiled softly and tenderly, filled with innocent tiredness, making it so that Yan Jin could only relent.

Yan Jin took a deep breath and held it for a moment before slowly letting it out.

Then he tilted his head in frustration and mumbled, “Okay.”

Shen Zhixian kissed him again with his eyebrows lifted up before pushing him off. Turning under the comforter, he revealed a gentle smile "Isn't A’Jin coming?"

Shen Zhixian was actually a very forgiving person. He was usually not too concerned about trivial things.

But this didn’t mean that Shen Zhixian won’t have a small book of secret revenge.

At this time, the first page of this small book was opened, and Yan Jin's name was written on it.

Last time, Yan Jin toed the line but escaped without fully extinguishing the fire. Shen Zhixian had said that he wouldn’t allow him to touch so easily and that he would retaliate.

In order to prevent Yan Jin from recklessly messing around next time, he wanted to make Yan Jin regret it a bit. He embraced Yan Jin in a relaxed manner and rubbed against him in a natural, inadvertent manner until he found a satisfactory position. Finally, he closed his eyes comfortably.

Shen Zhixian didn’t lie. In fact, he'd been very tense when they were in the secret realm. He’d also performed such a big move. He was indeed a little tired. Feeling Yan Jin's stiffness, he secretly rejoiced for a while, and then finally fell asleep.

Shen Zhixian slept deeply because Yan Jin was by his side. He didn't need

to guard against anything and just needed to sleep peacefully. When he woke up, he looked around in a trance, feeling for a moment as if he was in a different world.

Perhaps, the instinct of his previous life was still embedded in his bones. When She Zhixian woke up, feeling groggy, he subconsciously mumbled, “Still tired. I want to bath in the hot spring.”

It seemed as if, in some distant memories, he liked to soak in the hot spring after waking up. Because his soul hadn’t fully healed, he was always tired and found it frustrating to always be sleeping all the time. So he liked to bath to soothe away his fatigue.

As soon as he said this, Shen Zhixian’s mind cleared and he shook his head. With a smile, he said, “Still tired. Let’s lie down for a while.”

He was about to go back to sleep, but Yan Jin said, “There’s a hot spring in the back. The water came from a mountain with strong spiritual outside the wasteland. If you want to, you can try it.”

Shen Zhixian hummed with some interest. “Okay, let’s see it.”

.....

The hot spring water was indeed full of spiritual power. Shen Zhixian didn’t know how much effort Jin Yan put into filling it from such a distant mountain.

Shen Zhixian kicked his shoes to the side. He stood beside the hot spring and dipped in his toes to sense the water temperature.

It happened to be his favorite temperature.

Shen Zhixian was happy. He came here without a coat and wore only his inner robe, which was very convenient for idling. He loosely fastened the sash and walked down the steps that were built into the hot spring pool.

His clothes soon became wet with water. The fabric floated up toward the water’s surface and faintly revealed a slender body. After getting into the water, Shen Zhixian found a slightly elevated stone platform and sat down, feeling quite comfortable.

“Will A’jin come in?” he asked casually.

When he was using the hot spring in Qingyun Sect, he’d asked Yan Jin to join him a few times but Yan Jin always refused. He’d become used to Yan Jin’s refusal. Today, he only asked at random, thinking that Yan Jin would shake his head. Unexpectedly, Yan Jin walked into the water and made his way toward him.

In the rising steam, the look in Yan Jin’s eyes was somewhat indecipherable.

Not thinking too much, Shen Zhixian moved aside to make room for him and said, “A’jin, rub my shoulders for me.”

The hot spring water was full of spiritual qi. The lingering strand of qi, along with Yan Jin’s massage, soaked through his skin and settled into his veins. It made him feel relaxed and drowsy. Shen Zhixian was like a big cat that had eaten its fill. He lazily nestled in Yan Jin’s arms, as if he was about to fall asleep again.

However, Yan Jin's hands soon became unbridled. He quietly untied Shen Zhixian's sash and pressed his hand against Shen Zhixian’s bare waist.

Shen Zhixian was suddenly wide awake. When he opened his eyes, he saw the heat in Yan Jin’s gradually deepening eyes. He immediately realized that things weren’t good and tried to slip away. But this time, Yan Jin was determined not to let him go. He gently but firmly pressed him against the stone platform.

Shen Zhixian lightly pushed him but he was immovable. His hands under the water only grew more wanton beneath Shen Zhixian’s waist. Shen Zhixian felt ticklish. He bit back a smile and continued to push him. When

he finally spoke, his voice was low and husky, lined with a trace of pleasure. “Master won’t run away.”

Bad guy.

Shen Zhixian’s mind was becoming hazy. He didn’t know if he’d scolded Yan Jin out loud.

The water’s surface rippled delicately. Shen Zhixian’s whole body felt as if he was a boat in the ocean, floating and swaying non-stop.

As they reached the edge of bliss, Yan Jin slowed down. He lowered his head and lightly caught Shen Zhixian’s earlobe between his teeth. He murmured, “Does Master still remember what he promised me?”

Shen Zhixian opened his watery eyes. His gaze shifted slightly to the person in front of him. His mind was caught in a haze. How could he remember what he promised? He just wanted to urge Yan Jin to hurry up and continue.

But Yan Jin didn’t move. His eyes held a hint of a smile. “Master promised that he’ll read that book to me…”

His words helped Shen Zhixian remember. Some time ago, before they found out that it was Yan Shen who’d laid a trap for Yan Jin, they were traveling with that group of careless youths. That was when Shen Zhixian had promised him.

At that time, Yan Jin was being target by that those stupid people. Shen Zhixian was very upset so he had no choice but to think of something worthwhile to coax him with.

Shen Zhixian thought in a daze that there was indeed such a thing. He stared at Yan Jin regretfully.

Why did Yan Jin want him to read it out loud now….?

This scoundrel!

That book had too many sugary words. Under normal circumstances, reading it to Yan Jin would be bad enough. But, in this situation, wouldn’t it just be pouring oil in fire?

Shen Zhixian opened his mouth to refuse, only to find that his voice had turned soft and saccharine, like a cross between a piece of sweet cake and a kitten’s purr. His usual calmness was gone. Taken aback, he silenced himself and then settled on just shaking his head.

His earlobe was lightly pinched between Yan Jin’s teeth, and he couldn’t shake his head much. In fact, even if his earlobe wasn’t bitten, he still had no energy. At this moment, he felt as if he would melt into the hot spring water.

Yan Jin let go of his earlobe and turned to kiss him gently on his lips. Yan Jin whispered in a low voice, “Sui Xian’s words can’t be trusted..."

Then, Yan Jin proceeded to deliberately tortured him so that he could only cling tightly to Yan Jin's shoulders. Every movement made his entire body felt as if he would go crazy. He trembled all over. If Yan Jin wasn’t holding on to him, he would probably fall limply into the water.

“If Sui Xian doesn’t want to read, then how about Sui Xian sing a song?”

Yan Jin’s mischief was simply too hard to hold down.

Shen Zhixian slightly tilted his head, panting in hot breaths. On his long eyelashes were drops of crystal beads, though it was unknown whether these were spring water or sweat. He clenched his teeth, his mind a desire-filled haze as he lost himself in his body’s instinct. When he spoke in a whisper, his voice trembled like a spring breeze blowing over branches of flowers. “Festivity in Spring, with a cup of green wine and a song... I bow down to profess three wishes…”

Festivity in Spring, with a cup of green wine and a song, I bow down to profess three wishes.

The first wish is for my love to live long, the second wish is for good health, and the third wish is for us to be like a pair of swallows resting on a beam...

His voice was uneven, the tone trembling. Shen Zhixian gained a bit of clarity. He opened his watery eyes and his mouth brushed against Yan Jin’s ear as he said the words clearly and succinctly.

“Together, year after year…”

“A’jin, let’s stay together, year after year…”

Translator Xixi:
What a sweet ending. Sigh. Well, at least there are still 3 extras left.

The poem is called "Longevity Girl" by Feng Yansi, composed for her husband. I took liberty with translating the word "love." In the original poem, she'd said lord or lord husband. But, thinking about the context of this poem, love (as in lover) still seemed accurate enough.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master extra 1

The festivals in the cultivation realm were actually similar to that of the ordinary world.

For example, today was the Mid-Autumn Festival.

This should be an occasional for a happy, blissful celebration with the family.

However, Shen Zhixian was tired of the Qingyun Sect’s Mid-Autumn Festival activities and didn’t want to face the wild demons of the wasteland. He thought for a while and decided to go to the mortal world for some fun this year.

So Shen Zhixian took advantage of Yan Jin's inattention, left behind a note, and silently went to the mortal world alone.

There were only a few, concise words on the paper. Yan Jin glanced at it, frowned slightly, and then sighed helplessly.

Sui Xian ran away again.

This time, there was no clue left behind, and he wasn’t allowed to use spells or the contract to locate him.

.....

The festivals in the mortal world were usually much more lively than that of the cultivation realm. Immortals were obsessed with cultivation and focused

less on the tricks that ordinary people come up with to have fun.

Yan Jin was walking on a crowded street, and there were a lot of people all around. Everyone was smiling, seeming quite happy. However, Yan Jin’s expression was calm, as if he was a stranger who could not integrate with this lively atmosphere.

He was used to being the odd one out.

Although Yan Jin was born in the cultivation realm, his childhood world had been humble and gray. When it came to lively and busy festivals like these, little Yan Jan often avoided them.

It wasn’t until later when he met Shen Zhixian that his life gradually gained light and color.

As for Shen Zhixian, when he was younger, he’d loved joining in on the fun. After his illness, he began to prefer quietness for various reasons. Now that he was with Yan Jin for a long time, and with everything going so well, his youthful spirit seemed to have gradually returned bit by bit.

Various sounds passed by Yan Jin's ears, but he was deaf to them. He only looked around calmly. After a while he saw a very lively place, and after a moment of silence, he walked decisively towards that side.

Shen Zhixian preferred the mountains and rivers. The place he chose was a water town beside the mountains. Yan Jin followed the rules and didn’t use any magic spells as he passed through the densely packed crowds. What came into view was a spacious river.

The starlit sky and the brilliant lights of the world was reflected in the water. A few pleasure boats floated among the colorful surface.

Shen Zhixian had shown him these pleasure boats a long time ago. However, what was causing tonight’s liveliness…didn’t appear to be these pleasure boats.

“Good!”

“Wonderful!”

“What a splendid view!”

It was hard to tell who was yelling with such excitement. Yan Jin looked at the particular small boat in the middle of the river. When he saw the man inside the boat, his forehead jerked happily.

The person sitting on that small boat had inky black hair and on his face rested a jade half-mask, only exposing a delicate chin. He was dressed in a plain white robe with a dark red coat draped loosely over his body, the sash unfastened. He sat in a lazy, languid posture, one long leg folded up while the other was concealed underneath the folds of his robe.

His boat drifted by two pleasure boats, which were moored on the banks. The many young masters aboard saw his half-covered face and their hearts began to feel itchy. They leaned against the deck to try to speak to him. Meanwhile, other courageous young women threw silk flowers at him.

But the silk flowers were too light. A gust of wind blew over them, making them unable to reach the boat and fell into the water instead.

The man in red ignored all the excitement around him. No matter how hard the people tried to get his attention, he continued to lazily rest his chin on one hand, leaning back to look at the bright moon in the sky.

His eyes were focused and attentive, as if he was looking at a peerless treasure.

Even the people looking at him couldn’t help but follow his gaze to look at the bright moon.

As everyone was looking up at the moon, the man in red withdrew his gaze. He lightly chuckled and reached over to pick up a jade chopstick and lazily fiddled with it.

On the small table next to him was a bottle of hard liquor, two bottles of wine, a small dish of peanuts, and another jade chopstick. The man in red played with the chopstick in his hand and leaned back. He suddenly cleared his throat and sang in a clear and melodious voice.

His chopstick lightly tapped on the table, his eyes half-closed, as he sang in a loud, carefree voice, “This esteemed lord glimpse Yu Xiao, reflected under a silver lamplight and singing a song that is too enchanting. Drunk in songs, who can regret it? The song ended but the taste of wine remains….”

He probably drank too much wine. His voice was lazy and languid, full of intoxication. The tone wasn’t clear and was like a small, white feather brushing against everyone’s ears.

Making them crazy with excitement.

“Spring is quiet and the night lingers. Chu Palace is as distant as Biyuntian. But the dream soul had no restraint and stepped on poplar flowers to cross Xie Qiao…”

The last words were sung very lightly, ending on a sigh. The man in red threw down the jade chopstick, picked up the wine cup, and tipped his head back to drain it.

Because he was drinking too quickly, a few drops of liquor dripped down the corners of his mouth, sliding down his chin to his neck, leaving a shallow trail of watermarks.

As he was striking the cup and singing, everyone’s eyes were drawn to him. The crowd exclaimed, full of admiration

Yan Jin’s face froze and he strode down the banks.

It just so happened that a tourist came ashore and returned his small boat rental. The owner of the boat held on to the rope, counting copper coins with joy. Suddenly, a dark shadow appeared in front of him. A person pulled

the rope attached to the boat.

“Ai, ai ,ai, this boat is no longer chartered! I should go back—” Before the boat owner could finish speaking, he felt his hand sink. Seeing the gold ingot, he immediately smiled and widened his eyes. “Aiya, esteem guest. Please, do you need me…”

He pushed the large ingot into his sleeve and raised his head, just in time to see that his boat was already some distance away. The tall man was rowing the boat toward the middle of the river.

“... row for you?” The boat owner finished saying, stunned. He scratched his head. “He doesn’t seem to need it….”

It happened really fast.

According to the memories of the people present, it happened like this:

“The little boat came out of nowhere. The man in black was very fierce. He rowed the boat quickly and leaned over. With a jump, he landed in the boat where the red beauty was sitting.”

The brother who missed the beauty was filled with indignation. Meanwhile, the speaker gestured wildly as he continued saying, “Then he started rowing the boat, moving the oars so fast that it was a blur. Just like that, he snatched the beauty away. No one could stop him! I was so angry!”

Of course, that was all afterward and was not worth mentioning for the time being. The situation now was that Yan Jin was rowing with a cold face, avoiding pleasure boats, and moving further and further away.

Shen Zhixian couldn’t contain his laughter. With his mask off and eyes crescent to the point of tears, he laughingly said, “A’jin, you slow down… This is the Mid-Autumn Festival, not a boat race…”

This boat had completely left everyone in the dust!

Yan Jin pressed his lips tightly and rowed all the way to a sparsely populated place before finally slowing down. He set the oars aside and turned his head to look at the man in messy, red clothes who was still grinning at him. “Fortunately, the rules for not using spells were set in advance.”

He paused for a moment, then continued, “....Otherwise, Master, I’m afraid you won’t be able to laugh.”

Shen Zhixian discovered that the surrounding silence was too deep, as if there were only the two of them. He didn't have a good feeling about this. He smiled slightly and raised his hands, but Yan Jin said, “Master should also obey the rules.”

Shen Zhixian dispersed the newly condensed spiritual power and looked away. The river was full of stars. While Yan Jin wasn’t paying attention, he got up and wanted to jump into the water.

However, Yan Jin's reaction was too quick. With one quick stretch of his hand, he caught Shen Zhixian's ankle.

With this grip, Yan Jin discovered that the man was not wearing shoes or socks. His delicate skin was slightly cool in the night breeze and holding it was like holding a piece of soft jade. With barely any efforts, he yanked the man back and pulled him into his arms.

Shen Zhixian struggled for a bit. Finally, he relented. With lowered eyebrows, he immediately begged for mercy. “I was wrong. A‘jin, I was wrong... Let me go this time ..."

This small boat could carry two to three people and had a small canopy. Yan Jin hid the man inside the canopy. The moment the curtain fell, the lights grew dim.

Shen Zhixian heard Yan Jin’s deep and low voice by his ear, “Too late. If Master wants to perform an act in a play, then disciple...should always accompany Master to complete it.”

As Yan Jin’s master, Shen Zhixian laughed teasingly and pretended to be stupid, “What play?
How do I not know about it?”

“It’s probably…” A hot, heated kiss came down. After a moment, Yan Jin smiled against Shen Zhixian’s mouth, full of satisfaction. “...a play about how an evil tyrant captured the weak and innocent little beauty.”

“.....”

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It's Not Easy Being a Master extra 2

After witnessing the secret realm's collapse and annihilating the demons, there was a short period of rejoicing. Then, after watching in stupefaction as the Lord of the Wasteland abducted Sect Leader Shen, everyone began to fall into a panic again.

What the heck was going on? What to do? Won’t Sect Leader Shen be in trouble? What was this big devil planning to do to Sect Leader Shen?!

Many disciples stared at Wu Xuan. Several of Wu Xuan’s people grew stressed and looked at each other.

Their eyes were cautious.

Due to their current conditions, they couldn’t just storm into the wasteland to find the person. The leaders could only take their disciples back home before taking a short rest and traveling to Qingyun Sect to discuss the situation.

Wu Xuan was the first to go.

Then he came back in a trance.

Xue Ci and others sent a letter asking him about the situation. Wu Xuan remained silent for a long time, not knowing how to reply.

In fact, he didn't need to reply. Soon, a rumor spread quickly and that was enough.

When Xue Ci heard the rumor, he was silent for a long time. Then he carefully asked the young disciples who’d came to report it, “How did Qingyun Sect respond from top to bottom? Was there any anger?"

The young disciple also felt that it was quite unbelievable. He said dumbly. “It seems not. They’re quite calm."

Xue Ci, “.....”

Xue Ci felt that the older he got, the less he could keep up with the rhythm of young people.

Shen Zhixian wasn’t very clear about the rumors spreading in the outside world. Before he left Qingyun Sect, he’d made a lot of arrangements. Even without him there, the whole set would be able to operate properly. Therefore, he wasn’t in a hurry to go back. He stayed in the wasteland with ease and would only occasionally communicate with several elders.

After being lazy for almost a month, Shen Zhixian left the wasteland.

Yan Jin had something to do with it. He drove away Shen Zhixian's favorite wolf cub, making Shen Zhixian a little angry so he decided it was time to go back to the sect.

Then he became stunned.

This……

What were they saying?

Why would Shen Zhixian willingly sacrifice his righteousness to personally tame the wasteland devil with true love? It moved people to tears. All over, everyone claimed that this kind of devotion to justice was indeed worthy of admiration and should be strongly commended...

What fantasy world had he transmigrated into again?

Shen Zhixian concealed his appearance and stood at the end of the street, listening to a round of rumors. The more he listened, the more he laughed. After thinking for a while, he silently went back to the sect. He didn’t immediately up to the top of the Fifth Peak. Instead, he went to the disciple's residence and looked around.

It was noon and everyone was resting. But, Ming Yi’s house was very lively. He was having a good discussion with another disciple, Ming Li, and wasn’t aware that there was someone outside. Naturally, if Shen Zhixian wanted to hide his presence, it would be impossible for them to detect it.

"I don't think it's good. It doesn't accurately reflect the sect leader’s great righteousness. It should be more exaggerated. My manuscript is better.”

“I don’t think so. Your manuscript is too exaggerated. It may cause too much gossip. It’s not good.”

“But rumors should be mixed with the real and the false, so that people can't tell clearly…”

Those words almost lead to scuffle.

After listening for a while, Shen Zhixian raised his hand and knocked twice on the door. Without waiting for a response, he pushed the door open.

Ming Yi, who was in the middle of quarreling with the other young disciple, suddenly heard the door open. His back was to the door but he didn’t bother to look back. “Who--”

Ming Li, who was sitting opposite him, looked up as soon as the door opened and instantly became shocked.

In the next instant, Ming Li hurriedly knelt down and became a terrified little quail. “Sect, Sect, Sect, Sect--”

Ming Yi’s heart dropped. He whipped around, saw Shen Zhixian, and immediately became a second little quail. “Sect, Sect, Sect, Sect--”

Shen Zhixian didn’t let them get up and first looked at the papers strewn messily on the table.

Every time he flipped a sheet, they trembled until at last the two little quails nearly trembled into the ground. Shen Zhixian held the stack of papers neatly in his hands and asked slowly, “Who is Qing Yun?”

Ming Yi’s forehead broke out in sweat. He didn’t dare lift his head and kept his face lowered as he stammered, “It’s….it’s disciple…”

Case solved.

Shen Zhixian counted the number of melon fields in the nearby farms that were in urgent need of a field hand, and asked lightly, “I haven't seen the new book recently. You haven’t written it yet?"

"Little, little, little disciple do not dare ..."

Ming Yi cautiously looked at the door from the corner of his eyes. But, the door was empty. The person he wanted to see wasn’t there. He became even more terrified. Earlier, he was arguing so fiercely with Ming Li, but now he was willing to sacrifice himself for brotherhood. Closing his eyes, he honestly confessed, “Sect Leader, this disciple doesn’t dare…”

So they were accomplices.

Shen Zhixian wasn’t really angry. As he watched the two little quails tremble, he couldn’t help wanting to milk more fun out of this. He continued to frighten them. “Laying out your elder’s life as you wish is a major crime. It seems like the sect’s rule--”

He paused deliberately for a moment. The two little quails dared not look up. Their hands were pressed so tightly to the ground that their fingertips were white. Shen Zhixian said, “Who taught you these words?”

Ming Yi looked up in surprise and saw Shen Zhixian shaking the thick stack

of papers in his hand.

Shen Zhixian asked meaningfully, “Since you have the courage to disrespect your seniors like this, you’d better not talk drivel. Who taught you to say these words?”

The two young disciples stammered but dared not say anything. Shen Zhixian suddenly remembered that Yan Jin had left the wasteland for a short period. At the time, while he cheerfully playing with wasteland’s demons and monsters, Yan Jin left for two hours. He hadn’t thought much about it, but now….

“Has Yan Jin been back?”

Ming Yi had a cold sweat on his forehead. He whispered “yes,” while crying in his heart: *Senior Brother Yan, forgive me. I really didn’t mean to. Wu wu wu wu.*

His hunch was correct.

Shen Zhixian shook his head slightly, collected his serious expression, and smiled slightly. “Get up.”

The two little quails looked at him timidly, and when Ming Yi saw that the sect leader wasn't angry, he stood up carefully and bowed to the side.

“At this moment, I won’t hold you accountable. It’s just that these words....needs more caution.”

Shen Zhixian’s words were vague. If it was someone else who said this, it would stand to reason that the person wouldn’t allow the words to be published. But, this person was Shen Zhixian, whose tone implied....Ming Yi hesitated before gathering up his courage and asked, “The disciple is stupid. Please ask Sect Leader for clarification.”

Shen Zhixian sighed. When he spoke, there was an imperceptible smile in his voice. “The big devil in the wasteland had already been reformed.

There’s no need for the immortals to give up their righteousness...to tame the big devil in the wasteland, isn’t this right?”

……..

After leaving Ming Yi, Shen Zhixian went to see the elders. Apart from Fourth Elder who knew a point or two, the other three elders didn’t know much about his connection with Yan Jin and the wasteland.

These elders were his martial uncles. Shen Zhixian respected them and expressed his apologies to them. Even the most serious and solemn elder of the bunch only frowned and told him to be careful. There was nothing else to be said.

Shen Zhixian was grateful, and when Yan Jin came the next day, he took him back to see the elders.

It was evening when the two returned to Fifth Peak. After taking over as the sect leader, Shen Zhixian should have moved to the main peak, but he’d become used to living on Fifth Peak. What’s more, he was too lazy to move. Therefore, he decided that he would not move, and so he simply continued to live here.

During dinner, a young disciple came to tell them that they have a guest.

Shen Zhixian asked briefly, then waved his hand to let the disciple invite the person in.

The guest was the bald monk, whom they hadn’t seen in a long time.

The bald monk seemed to have been dire straits recently. Seeing a table full of food, his eyes brightened. He sat down without any embarrassment and requested for meat buns.

He seemed to have a special liking for meat buns and steamed buns. While sipping his tea, Shen Zhixian watched him wolfing down the meat buns. Absentmindedly, he remembered the pit-filled novel he had originally

read...

The author's name seemed to be four characters: Steamed Bun Buddhist Monk.

Shen Zhixian, “.....”

Now that everything was peaceful, the old calculations or grudges of the past were nothing.

The three had known each other for a long time. They set out wine in the pavilion and drank together for one night. Shen Zhixian and Yan Jin drank only a little bit, but the bald monk was probably anxious about something. He poured himself a few jars of wine and got himself drunk.

“You're both finally considered settled…” The bald monk lay on the table, murmuring in a daze. “Our poor little A’fei. I don't know yet..."

His voice gradually dropped. After a while, he let out a deep grunt. It was just that he was too drunk and couldn't sleep well. After two or three grunts, he rolled over and fell to the ground.

Shen Zhixian, “.....”

The corners of Shen Zhixian's mouth curved up, thinking this was rather funny. As he was about to speak, the bald monk woke up with a start and stood up, staring out of the mountain and seeing a vast night.

He stood in a daze for a long time. After drunkenly turning two circles, he cupped his hand respectfully toward an old tree. “The old monk is full of food and drink, and he should leave…”

After the bald monk finished speaking, he made another turn. This time, he happened to turn in the right direction. He stepped down the stone steps and staggered downhill. Although he was drunk, he walked very fast.

Shen Zhixian, “.....”

Shen Zhixian summoned the two young disciples to lead the bald monk down the mountain. When he turned around, he glimpsed a thin piece of paper lying under his seat.

He picked it up easily. The paper was very thin, but the texture was very durable. He could feel the abundant spiritual power, which seemed somewhat familiar.

Shen Zhixian held it and looked at it with Yan Jin. There were many lines scribbled on the paper. But there there doesn't seem to be any logical rules to it so it was difficult to determine what it was exactly. The two of them looked at it for a while.

Based on the bald monk's quick footsteps, Shen Zhixian feared that he would be almost at the foot of the mountain by now.

After drinking, Shen Zhixian was also lazy. Too lazy to look for someone, he simply tucked it into his sleeve. “If it's important, the bald monk will come back. If it’s not important, I will return it to him next time I see him.”

Yan Jin didn't care very much. He helped Shen Zhixian into the house and turned around to prepare the hot water.

The night was heavy, and the night pearl in the corner exuded a soft light. On the bed, the two embraced each other and fell asleep. No one had noticed that Shen Zhixian's coat, which had fallen to the ground, had suddenly moved.

A light wind seemed to be blowing over the coat, exposing a piece of paper. The messy lines on the paper were like flowing water, drifting gently.

……

Shen Zhixian hadn't had a dream in a long time. He didn’t know if it was because he'd been drinking. He slept drowsily and dreamed.

He dreamed that he'd become a cat.

A snow-white, princely and beautiful Shen Maomao. {T/N: Mao = cat)

Shen Maomao opened his eyes in the dream. The house table in front of him was very tall. He looked up and found that he was actually lying next to an ordinary wooden bench.

The sky was still dim, but light was gradually rising in the sky. Even though it hadn’t completely covered the whole sky, some people were already busy. There was the sound of hot water boiling, the sound of crackling and frying things in the oil pan, and the sound of the steamer colliding.

Shen Maomao moved, trying to see where he was. But when he moved, he immediately felt some pain in his left hind paw.

Shen Maomao tilted his head and saw that a wooden bench had fallen next to him. His left hind paw was probably injured by the wooden bench and that was why it was so painful.

He had no time to think about what was going on. A fierce, young voice rang above his head, “Mom! There’s a cat messing around here! He knocked down the stool!”

“Then you beat him away. Don’t be so noisy…”

Sensing the other person’s dangerous intention, Shen Maomao's body instinctively moved faster than his thoughts.

But, as soon as the left paw touched the ground, pain immediately shot through his body.

Shen Maomao let out a breath and couldn't help meowing out in pain. The boy who had just spoken earlier held a feather duster and swiped it at him. He staggered forward and ran a few steps.

There was no trace of spiritual power on this body. Shen Maomao endured

the pain of his left hind paw and stumbled forward to avoid the feather duster behind him.

The other person was a little child and probably thought it was quite fun. Even though Shen Maomao had already ran away from the breakfast shop, the little kid was still running after him with a smile.

His left hind paw was in such pain that he felt as if he would lose consciousness. Shen Maomao gasped. His meows were weak and helpless, and his footsteps slowly weakened.

Seeing that the feather duster was about to fall on him again, a black fluffball rushed out of nowhere and picked up his neck and ran away.

"Ah! Mom! There’s a black dog!"

The child shouted again. He chased a few steps and watched as the little black dog ran into a narrow alley with the little white cat in its mouth. He stomped his feet in anger.

Shen Maomao swayed back and forth in a mess until he became dizzy. Finally, he was gently placed down. He looked up at the dog that had grabbed him and ran.

No, it wasn’t a dog.

Shen Maomao stared at the black fluff that was about his size and meowed.

The black fluffball flicked its tail, gasped for two breaths, and whined at him.

It’s whine was soft and milky.

Ah, it's a little wolf cub.

The wolf cub's eyes were round and black. Shen Maomao recognized at a glance that there was a high chance this was Yan Jin. These eyes looked too

much like Yan Jin’s when he was a child.

Shen Maomao thought this and murmured tentatively to him.

He wanted to talk, but what he was thinking about in his heart became meows when said out loud. He tilted his head and looked at the little black wolf cub in front of him. Yan Xiaolang seemed to recognize him and yet not recognize him at the same time. [T/N: Xiaolang = little wolf]

Before long, the little boy entered unhesitatingly.

He was afraid that the dog would bite him, so he didn't dare to step forward and just threw the stones at a distance.

Shen Maomao couldn't move because of his foot injury and Yan Xiaolang was still young and lacked the energy to run. The child was very skillful at throwing stones and almost hit Shen Maomao’s tail.

Yan Xiaolang nervously stood up. He put away his little claws and moved Shen Maomao’s tail over. Afterward, he lowered his head and pulled Shen Maomao’s against his breast.

Stones were thrown over one after another. Yan Xiaolang squatted in front of Shen Maomao and desperately hugged Shen Maomao between his two paws, blocking the stones with his body.

A stone hit Yan Xiaolang and he whimpered in pain, but he never let go of the cat.

Shen Maomao looked up with some difficulties and saw that his bright and dark eyes were full of pain. His wet nose was trembling and his breath was warm.

Really looked silly.

Fortunately, after the child threw six to seven stones, he was called back by his mother.

Shen Maomao regained his sense and pushed Yan Xiaolang away. He dragged his injured leg and walked around to take a look at Yan Xiaolang’s wound. The stones were sharp and ended up cutting his back into a bloody mess.

Even knowing that it was a dream, Shen Maomao was very angry. He wanted to scratch the child, but he was helpless. On the one hand, his paw was injured. On the other hand, there was no medicine. He hesitated and then began to tenderly lick Yan Xiaolang’s wound.

At first, he wasn’t used to it so it took him a while to become proficient. The bloody smell exploded between his lips and tongue, and he poked Yan Xiaolang’s front paw with a small claw.

Yan Xiaolang understood what he wanted and lowered his head obediently.

Shen Maomao retracted his sharp claws and patted Yan Xiaolang’s head. “Miao wu wu wu.” Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Wait for our injuries to heal and we’ll fight together.

Yan Xialang hummed and rubbed his head against Shen Car’s fluffy paws

It would be too difficult for a cat with an injured leg and a young wolf cub to stay in town. After hiding in town for two days, Shen Maomao frowned and decided to take Ya Xiaolang out of town.

There is a forest not far from the town, but Shen Maomao didn’t dare to go in. After all, there were many beasts in the forest. If they meet any of those beasts, they’ll surely be swallowed up into the beast's belly.

So they could only hover around the edge of the woods. When they’re hungry, they catched a fish in the river water.

Shen Maomao refused to eat raw fish so Yan Xiaolang dragged some dry wood and piled them together. Shen Maomao picked up a matchbook and set the pile on fire with some difficulties. Yan Xiaolang used a branch to

pierce the fish and began to grill it.

The two fluffballs had limited abilities. The fish wasn’t very clean and was difficult to grilled. After a while, the fish was still not fully grilled. Instead, the two almost ended up burning their fluffy fur.

Shen Maomao sighed and threw the failed grilled fish into the fire and walked away.

Yan Xiaolang followed in frustration, seeming to feel guilty and restless.

Shen Maomao took him to hide behind a big tree, patted his paw, and motioned for him to feel at ease.

They didn’t put out the fire, and it was soon discovered by a person passing by. The passerby saw a fish that was burnt black, and suddenly became interested in eating grilled fish. He took off his shoes and socks, tied up the hem of his pants, and rolled up his sleeves.

The aroma of the grilled fish spread quickly. Shen Maomao heard a growl from Yan Xiaolang's stomach. He unsheathed his claws, revealing sharp nails.

The injury on Shen Maomao’s paw was already better. He motioned to Yan Xiaolang to sit on a root underneath and nimbly and silently climbed up the tree onto a branch.

There were many little illusion ghosts hanging upside down on the branch. Shen Mao Mao took a deep breath, then two paws grabbed hold of the branch and he began to shake it vigorously.

When the branch started to shake, the person looked around cautiously. But, Shen Maomao had hid himself very well in the green leaves and so he wasn’t discovered.

The little illusion ghosts were alarmed and began to look around. Shen Maomao lifted his paws towards them and made a threatening meow. The

little illusion ghosts were frightened and scattered. This group of panicked things rushed toward the passerby.

The little ghosts were like shadows, their figures transparent and hard to see. In the night time, they could be quite scary for ordinary people. The passerby was frightened and ran away, leaving behind the freshly grilled fish.

After he ran away, Shen Mao Mao calmly climbed down the tree. However, he tripped over a raised twig and nearly fell down. Scared, Yan Xiaolang looked up at him nervously

Fortunately, Shen Maomao landed safely. He shook his fur and, pretending that nothing had happened, walked elegantly to the fire.

The fish was on a twig, which was partially embedded in the ground, and it was roasted just right.

Shen Mao Mao squatted down. Two front paws pulled out the twig and handed it to Yan Xiaolang.

Yan Xiaolang's eyes were bright and full of satisfaction. He took the grilled fish and stared at it, waiting for it to cool.

While he looked at the grilled fish, Shen Maomao looked at him. In the light of the flames, Shen Maoma suddenly felt that Yan Xiaolang seemed to have maybe ... grown up a little bit?

After the grilled fish finally cooled down, Yan Xiaolang began to nibble the fish.

He very carefully gnawed the fish’s side. Shen Maomao couldn’t help but call out, “Miao wu miao wu.” Eat the meat, not the bones.

However, Yan Xiaolang, who had always been obedient, ignored him this time. He still carefully gnawed away the fish bones and then handed the grilled fish back to Shen Maomao.

Shen Maomao was touched. He couldn’t help but squint his eyes, wanting to put on a pleased expression. He took a bite at the fish’s tail and tasted it. After pushing the fish back to Yan Xiaolang, he lifted his chin to indicate that he should also eat.

Seeing that Shen Maomao refused to eat any more, Yan Xiaolang was anxious and whined a few times. His black pupils were large and wet..

Shen Maomao no longer responded. He only tilted his head and looked at Yan Xiaolang. The closer he looked, the more he realized that Yan Xiaolang really did get bigger.

Originally they were about the same height. One could even say that Yan Xiaolang was a little shorter than him. How many days had passed? How did he grow so tall already?!

Yan Xiaolang was now half a head taller than him!

Shen Maomao was a little angry. They’re both from the same fluffy family. But, how could Yan Xiaolang grow so tall, but he couldn’t?! He straightened his body but found that he was still shorter.

How good.

Shen Maomao sighed, finding that he couldn’t blame Yan Xiaolang. They separated the fish and continued to eat while it was hot. The fish was delicious but it was too small, especially since they’re both splitting it. Shen Maomao spit out a fish bone and sighed again.

After he wakes up from this dream, he’ll have to tell Yan Jin to go and catch a fish for them to eat.

The two fluffballs washed their paws by the river and went back to their simple nest.

Shen Maomao usually slept outside, but the wind was a bit cool tonight. As

he was getting sleepy, he suddenly felt Yan Xiaolang moved next to him.

“Miao?” He murmured lazily and squinted his eyes sleepily.

Yan Xiaolang responded with a whimper, and then sat up halfway. He gripped the back of Shen Maomao’s neck with his mouth and moved him to the inside of the nest. Then, the whole wolf body fell on Shen Maomao, pressing him firmly into the soft underbelly.

After Shen Maomao was pressed by him, he opened his eyes, meowed twice, and tried to push him away with his paws.

Yan Xiaolang didn't move. He was like a big warm blanket, protecting the little cat so that no wind could blow against it.

...He was just a little heavy.

Shen Maomao shifted under his belly, arched his head, and sighed generously.

Okay, sleep.

Before going to sleep, he made up his mind once again that he would grill fish when he wakes up. Thinking about it, he snuggled up with Yan Xiaolang and slept.

Perhaps this time the obsession was too deep. The thought of grilled fish finally pulled him out of Shen Maomao's dream.

There really was something heavy pressed up against him. When Shen Zhixian opened his eyes, he saw Yan Jin’s familiar face.

He moved slightly, but Yan Jin was still pressed up against his body, hugging him tightly, just like the little wolf in the dream.

Shen Zhixian raised his eyes to silently look at Yan Jin’s sleeping face for a long time. He smiled, sighed quietly, and reached out to hug Yan Jin’s waist

as if hugging his big baby.

Okay, sleep.

Wake up later to eat grilled fish.

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It's Not Easy Being a Master extra 3

About Duan Yuan's little disguise.

It was a distant memory.

At that time, Yuan Duan had just arrived at Qianyin Pavilion. In order to avoid his fated death, he had to dress up as a girl and become the personal disciple of the Third Pavilion Master, thus becoming a disciple of Qianyin Pavilion.

Because of his special circumstance, Third Pavilion Master used his supposed weak health as an excuse to separate him from the groups of female disciples so that he could practice alone.

Although little Duan Yuan was dressed as a girl, he was still a young boy at heart. He would inevitably have the naughty inclinations peculiar to boys. He could control himself when he was with the his disciple sisters. But, when he was by himself on Third Pavilion, he couldn’t help himself.

The Third Pavilion Master sighed. “How are you so naughty? You just look at the big senior brother from next door. He is very well-behaved. He gets up and practices every day, oftentimes before the sun is even up. But just look at your behavior…”

Duan Yuan was lying on a tree branch, struggling to pick the fruit that was just a tad bit out of reach. His skirt soon became messed up and dirty. He asked, “Who is the big senior brother?”

“Your big senior brother is Lian Qin.” With his heart in his throat, Third

Pavilion Master watched as Duan Yuan climb the tall, ancient tree. The child had a good spirit root and learned things quickly. He liked him very much too. He yelled, “Hurry down!”

After much struggle, Duan Yuan finally managed to pick the fruit and jumped out of the tree with satisfaction. He tilted his head and asked, "Does he really get up and practice every day before light?"

“Of course. He is very diligent and practices relentlessly, no matter what.”

Yuan Duan frowned slightly, finding this hard to believe. He’d always had a hard time getting up in the morning and couldn't separate from his bed until the very last moment. Sleeping in was the happiest thing in the world. How could anyone be willing to get up so early?

Ah, no. There were also his disciple sisters.

But the reason his sisters did so was because they wanted more time to dress up. Could it be that Senior Brother Lian Qin also...

This was the first time little Duan Yuan heard the name Lian Qin, followed by some weird thinking.

Later, the name Lian Qin appeared more and more in Duan Yuan’s life.

The sisters were clamoring that Senior Brother Lian Qin was so handsome and everyone was envious of Senior Brother Lian Qin’s strength. Even his master always praised, “Your Senior Brother Lian Qin is very talented. He is very hardworking and outstanding. What a good child. You need to learn from him.”

Duan Yuan flattened his mouth in dissatisfaction. He thought what he heard couldn’t be true so he decided to check it out for himself.

The next day, he had a hard time getting out of bed. By the time he finished washing up, the sky was already bright. Duan Yuan clenched his fists and walked toward Senior Brother Lian Qin’s residence, full of fighting spirit.

He wanted to see how hard Lian Qin was practicing!

When Yuan Duan got to Lian Qin’s courtyard, there was no one in sight. He sighed with relief and was about to say that Senior Brother Lian Qin’s so-called morning practice were lies when the sound of water caught his attention.

The sound seemed to be coming from the house. Duan Yuan thought for a moment and decided that since he’d come all this way, he ought to at least see what Senior Brother Lian Qin was doing.

Looking at the paper window, Duan Yuan, who’d read many martial arts novels about the Jianghu, didn’t think it would be right to peek through the window.

That was the behavior of the weak. Those with real strength would…

Little Duan Yuan, that jack of all trade, employed light body skill to climb with difficulties up Lian Qin’s roof. By the time he got there, he was so tired that he just wanted to lie there and pant loudly. But, he was afraid he might be found out so he covered his mouth and tried to control his breathing.

After a while, he eased his breath. Like those strong heroes in the novels, he calmly went to lift the tiles.

Lift—

Lift again—

What!

Why can't it be lifted?!

Duan Yuan pulled hard at the tile. After accidentally using too much strength, he ended up lifting two tiles that were stuck together, making a loud sound.

Duan Yuan was startled, and he dared not move for a while. He froze for a long time on the roof before gathering up his courage to carefully peek through the hole.

Senior Brother Lian Qin didn’t even lift his head up, as if he hadn’t noticed there was suddenly a hole in his roof or heard any sounds at all.

Senior Brother Lian Qin was bathing. Through the steam, he could only see Senior Brother Lian Qin’s strong arms and his distinct hands pushing the water.

Little Duan Yuan looked straight down. When clothed, Senior Brother Qin didn't look very strong at all. But, after taking his clothes off, it was like this….

Duan Yuan found that he lacked words to accurately describe the bathing youth. After thinking for a long time, the only words he could come up with were “full of strength.”

He also forgot his original intention and couldn't help but express envious admiration. Senior Brother Lian Qin seemed to be really...very handsome.

He was too focused on watching, his eyes warm and full of envy. Even Lian Qin underneath couldn’t stand it anymore.

When little Duan Yuan came to the yard, Lian Qin noticed the trespass, but he thought that it was just a junior brother who was passing through and so he was too lazy to care about it.

Lian Qin loved to be clean. Every day, after finishing his exercises, he would take a bath. The teachers and brothers around him knew his habit, and they usually don’t bother him.

But he never imagined that this junior brother would be so bold. Even after lingering in his yard for so long, the youth even climbed up his roof to peek at him through the tiles!

Lian Qin coldly finished bathing. He spun out of the water, quickly putting on his robe, even as he shot a strong wind up through the hole in the roof.

Yuan Duan was caught off guard and subconsciously blocked it. The strong wind ended up hitting the nearby tiles.

With a bang, a large section of the roof tiles shattered at once, crumbling underneath Duan Yuan’s feet. Before he could react, he fell straight down.

With a crash, he landed in Lian Qin’s bath water.

Lian Qin, “.....”

With cold eyes, he watched the youth flounder wildly in his bath water. After looking, he suddenly felt wrong. He reached out and lifted the person up. “...Junior Sister?”

He didn’t recognize Duan Yuan nor did he know his name. He only recognized that the person was wearing the standard garb for the female disciples in the sect.

Yuan Duan accidentally swallowed two mouthfuls of bath water. He sucked in a deep breath before climbing out of the tub. His clothes clung wetly to his body. Lian Qin immediately let go of him and quickly spun around.

Behind him came the sound of the junior sister climbing out of the water.

Lian Qin avoided thinking about what he’d just seen, including how the water droplets clung to the other person’s long eyelashes. He covered his discomfort with a light cough.

Then he heard the little junior sister exclaimed “wow”, and immediately he felt something attached to him—

The little junior sister, for whatever reason, hugged his waist from behind in a particularly enthusiastic manner. When Lian Qin turned back to look, he

saw that the other’s wet eyes were full of worship. “Senior Brother!!”

Lian Qin, “.....”

In the end, which martial uncle was not optimistic about his disciple and allowed the disciple to act so wildly?!!

Lianqin was a 16-year-old boy. He’d never encountered this situation before. This was, of course, his first meeting Duan Yuan, who lacked common sense.

Duan Yuan hugged him and refused to let go. "Senior Brother Lian Qin, teach me how to practice!"

Wow! Even Senior Brother Lian Qin's waist was so good to hug! The waist looked thin but when you hug it, you can feel the strong muscles underneath, which seemed to contain infinite power.

Little Duan Yuan completely forgot his previous dissatisfaction and didn’t remember what he was wearing at all. He just wanted Senior Brother Lian Qin to teach him how to cultivate into this look.

Lian Qin said coldly, “Release me. I'm not a female’s teacher—“

Duan Yuan conveniently ignored the first two words and confessed to him cheerfully, “I’m not a sister! I’m a brother!”

Lian Qin, “???”

He couldn't bear it anymore. After yanking the person away from his body, he strode out and walked away faster and faster and faster.

So early in the morning, many disciples in Qianyin Pavilion saw their acclaimed Senior Brother Lian Qin walking fast, his face shifting between blue and white.

Behind him quickly staggered a little sister. The little sister was wet from

head to toes and her eyes were trained worshipfully in front of her. While chasing, she shouted happily, “Senior Brother, wait for me!”

This little sister looked vaguely familiar—Wait!

Was that the most precious junior sister, Duan Yuan, the disciple of the Third Pavilion Master?

The disciples looked at each other. Their mouths gradually widened to let out a long, meaningful “Oh” sound. After which, they all showed an intrigued and excited expression.

...

About Lian Qin.

Lian Qin’s weapon was a guqin. It was originally a normal guqin with five strings.

After Duan Yuan exposed his identity to Lian Qin, he didn't have any worries at all. He would often come over and stick to Lian Qin for days on end. For this reason, he also overcame the habit of oversleeping.

The Third Pavilion Master saw Duan Yuan suddenly so diligent. He was so happy that his disciple could learn from Lian Qin, especially knowing that Duan Yuan had already disclosed his identity and still wasn’t ignored.

However, on the surface, Yuan Duan was supposed to practice together with Lian Qin. But, in fact….

Lian Qin sat, muttering expressionlessly. Next to him was the little junior brother... who was chatting out all his thoughts.

“Senior Brother, Senior Brother, it’s so hard. Second Senior Sister asked me what color rogue she was wearing today. I said the same color. She immediately murdered me…” Little Duan Yuan let out crying sounds. “Sixth Junior Sister asked me today, ‘Is my lip color okay?’ I agreed,

saying, ‘Like yesterday, it’s very pretty.’ Sixth Junior Sister also murdered me.”

“It’s too hard, Senior Brother… Do you know how to distinguish the color of rouge? Hurry up and teach me. I can’t practice until then.”

He leaned over and had a light, powdery fragrance on his body. Lian Qin didn't know which sister it was from.

Lian Qin opened his eyes, took a deep breath, and reached out to push him farther away. Looking at Duan Yuan’s pitiful face, he said, “...I don't know.”

He seemed to hesitate for a moment, and finally looked at Duan Yuan’s aggrieved eyes. He whispered, “You can come over to practice. Just don’t be so loud so others won’t know.”

Duan Yuan's grievances were swept away immediately, and he cheered, “Okay, Senior Brother! I’ll come here every day! Rest assured, I won't let others discover it!"

He rubbed his hands excitedly, eager to try. “I recently learned a new trick that would make me as light as a bird…”

Lian Qin, “.....”

Lian Qin recalled his recent experience with Duan Yuan’s ability to climb roofs, and he was silent for a long moment. He changed his words. “It's okay if others find out. Just pay attention to safety."

Having won Lian Qin’s consent, little Duan Yuan was no longer restricted and appeared on time everyday to practice with Lian Qin.

His cultivation progressed rapidly.

The Third Pavilion Master was very happy. When Duan Yuan quietly said that he wanted to gain practical experience with Senior Brother Lian Qin, he didn't think too much and agreed.

By this time, Duan Yuan had grown up somewhat. His temperament was much calmer. He could pretend to have a gentle and pure appearance in front of everyone. Only in front of Lian Qin, could he relax for a moment.

Yuan Duan followed Lian Qin to go out to practice. Since it would just be him and Lian Qin, he didn't bother disguising himself. He was so happy that he dragged Lian Qin's sleeves all around.

Lian Qin followed him, all the while scolding him. But, he didn't force anything.

Only later, something happened. Little Duan Yuan accidentally angered a big monster. The monster was very fierce. In order to save him, Lian Qin cut off the five strings from his guqin and even suffered some minor injuries before managing to kill the monster.

Little Duan Yuan was also injured. His arms were all wet with blood, but he didn't care about it at all. He hurried to see Lian Qin and then looked at Lian Qin's guqin in tears. "Senior Brother, the strings are broken…"

These strings were made out of extremely special materials, which Lian Qin had managed to find with much difficulty. To find this material again would be nearly impossible.

Little Duan Yuan cried with a sad face and asked what to do. Originally, Lian Qin wanted to tease him a few times. But, when he saw Duan Yuan's injured hand, his heart suddenly somehow became disturbed. Finally, he lifted his guqin away and began to treat Duan Yuan's wound with a cold face. "Since it broke, then it broke."

On one hand, little Duan Yuan felt relieved, while on the other, he couldn't help being anxious. "Senior Brother no longer has a weapon to use... Senior Brother, I'm really sorry…"

Lian Qin repeatedly blamed himself. It seemed like he was becoming more and more unhappy and he didn't know where the unhappiness came from.

Anyway, it wasn’t because the strings were broken. As he took care of little Duan Yuan’s wound, he sighed. “Don’t think about it. The strings weren’t good and I haven’t used them in a long time. It’s just broken. I can find something else. Don’t worry.”

Amidst Duan Yuan’s unease was a bit of happiness “Really, really?”

Lian Qin ran his hand over the guqin, and the five strings of spiritual power appeared suddenly. He then fiddled with it. The sound of the instrument was as good and perfect as it had once been.

Yuan Duan carefully touched the strings and finally smiled.

…..

The memory ended there. Duan Yuan held Lian Qin’s stringless guqin, and his thoughts went back and forth a thousand times. Finally, he couldn't help but sigh.

It’d been a long time since he touched Senior Brother Lian Qin's guqin.

It'd been a long time since he returned to the sect.

What’s more, this time….was his first time appearing in the sect in male clothes.

Duan Yuan felt a little uneasy in his heart. He turned his head to look at Lian Qin. Lian Qin’s face was a little pale. Although it was difficult to tell that he’d been seriously wounded, Duan Yuan knew the ice cone injury wasn’t as light as he made it seem.

Lian Qin won’t allow Duan Yuan to support him, so he volunteered to hold Lian Qin’s guqin.

Lian Qin glanced at him. He wanted to refuse, but he didn't know what to say. Instead, he swallowed the rejection that immediately sprung to his mouth and said, “Okay.”

Duan Yuan held Lian Qin’s guqin and followed Lian Qin back to see the masters.

When he was disguised as a woman, he’d deliberately made his face ugly. Now, he was back to normal, even though he’d been gone for a long time.

Duan Yuan felt the sect disciples' curious gaze looking at him and thought it was quite novel.

Until Lian Qin suddenly stopped and gave a little bow. “Third Martial Uncle.”

Lian Qin’s Third Martial Uncle….

Wasn’t that his master?!

Duan Yuan happily gave him a respectful bow. The Third Pavilion Master glance at him suspiciously, and his eyes quickly fell to the guqin in his arms. “Ay, isn’t that martial nephew’s guqin?”

Realizing that his master didn’t immediately recognize him, Duan Yuan was a little at a loss. Then, he heard his master’s voice suddenly cheerfully said, “Aiya, martial nephew’s guqin… Could it be that this person holding the guqin is the martial nephew’s wife? Hurry, let this old master take a look.”

Third Pavilion Master had long received the message that the situation regarding the secret realm had been solved and there was no longer any trouble. Thus, he began to care about other things. “Martial nephew brought his wife back, yes?”

Duan Yuan, with a blank face, met Third Pavilion Master’s expectant eyes.

Duan Yuan, “.....”

Third Pavilion Master, “.....”

Duan Yuan, “.....”

Third Pavilion Master, “.....F$%k!”

Xixi:
Hahaha... Nooo, I want more. But, looking at the chapter title "Qin Yuan," Lian Qin and Duan Yuan obviously eventually got together. (◕ ◕) *: ✧

Too bad we don't get to see how. _

This is it, readers. Thank you for reading and thank you so much to those who commented. May you quickly find your next binge-worthy read. As someone who'd just discovered danmei not too long ago and fell hard into this rabbit hole of no return, I have a pile of BL novels to wolf down. Hehe. *rubs hands expectantly *drools

Also, if you have a novel update account, please don't forget to rate this novel. Thank you!

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